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WINTER EVENINGS;

OR

LUCUBRATIONS

ON

Life and Letters.

BY VICESIMUS KNOX, D. D.

MASTER OF TUNBRIDGE SCHOOL, AND LATE FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD.

.....Hæc, ubi quid datur oti,
Inclusdo chartis.....*Hor.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

New-York:

PUBLISHED BY EVERT DUYCKINCK,
NO. 110 PEARL-STREET.
L. NICHOLS, *Printer.*
1805.

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TO

THE RIGHT HONORABLE

LLOYD,

LORD KENYON,

LORD CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE COURT OF KING'S BENCH.

MY LORD,

I AM sensible, that there is scarcely any compliment less valued in these times, than a Dedication. To dedicate, is certainly not the modern method of obtaining patronage. The avenues to a Great Man's favor, are usually more secret and serpentine. A Dedication is usually regarded as little better than a beggar's petition for eleemosynary relief; and causes stupid opulence to *triumph* over indigent ingenuity.

But, my Lord, tho' a Dedication may not be valued by the Person to whom it is addressed, and may not do him the least honor, yet it may be highly reputable to the Dedicator. It may reflect great credit on him to have fixed his esteem on a worthy character, and to have wished to

decorate his first page with the name of an HONEST MAN.

I freely confess, that to do MYSELF honor, is the sole motive of the liberty I take, in thus inscribing my book to your Lordship. I feel a pride in proclaiming, that I consider you as an example worthy of the most virtuous times, and peculiarly beneficial, as well as ornamental, in a selfish, a venal, and corrupt age. I am no flatterer, my Lord. I am not known to you; nor do I seek to be known. I only know your Lordship, as I know the Sun, by seeing the splendor of your public character, and feeling, in common with others, the beneficial influence of your public example on society. Why should I flatter? I have nothing to hope from you, my Lord, but your esteem; which I value highly, because you have mine, in your *public character*. I have, indeed, no pretentions to *this* honor, but those which arise from a sincere endeavor to promote, in these amusements of a lettered ease, what I think the most valuable purposes of society, and what I observe you most anxious to promote, good order, tranquillity, public spirit, and private virtue. Adulation would be inconsistent with that freedom which I profess, and would justly for-

feit your good opinion. Happily I cannot be suspected of it, when I thus publicly express my sense of what all men feel and acknowledge, the high value of a character like yours, in which INTEGRITY OF HEART, and intellectual ability, appear to be combined. I feel and express (but it is only in common with the Public, who, however divided in other respects, are in this united) a veneration for one of the best ornaments of the Peerage and of the TRIBUNAL.

I wish, my Lord, it was in my power to make you a present less unworthy of your acceptance. You are certainly able to give the best instruction, and require not to receive it. Let me not for a moment be supposed to offer my book to your Lordship, as containing any admonition of which you can stand in need; but let me be understood to mean nothing more by this inscription, than to adorn the first page by the name of a public personage, an UPRIGHT JUDGE, whom I conceive to be a living image of those virtues which it is the scope of the book, in a variety of modes, ultimately to enforce.

In a word, my Lord, I have dedicated the book to your Lordship, that I might have the honor of subscribing myself,

say it not as the formal conclusion of a letter, but that I might have, what I believe to be, the REAL honor of subscribing myself, with profound respect,

MY LORD,

An admirer of the *Spirit* and Integrity,

And your most humble Servant,

ANONYMOUS.

PREFACE

TO THE

FIRST AND ANONYMOUS EDITION.

HOWEVER I may be disposed to self-delusion, I am not so simple as to imagine that a book which has nothing to recommend itself can be recommended by a preface. I think it indeed at once a mean and vain attempt to deprecate a reader's displeasure, by preliminary submission. The avowal of conscious defects, of involuntary publication, of youth and inexperience, and of inability to resist the importunate solicitations of discerning friends, is ever supposed to be insincere; and, if it is true, ought in many instances to operate in the total suppression of the work for which it means to apologize. Great pretensions and bold professions, on the other hand, justly raise the contempt of a judicious reader. The liberal spirit of learning should scorn the language of self-commendation, and leave the soft and flowing diction of puffery to the Pulpit of the auctioneer, and the stage of the empiric.

But, though every reader may justly claim a right to form his own opinion of a book, and will certainly reject the interference of a party so interested as its author, yet a preface is for the most part proper, since custom causes it to be expected, and the omission may possibly be considered as the want of a respectful piece of ceremony. Truly unwilling am I to be deficient in respect for those, whose good opinion I must highly value, and for whose indulgence I shall certainly have great occasion.

But to proceed to business without farther preamble, lest I should be thought to write a preface to a preface.

My reader, on taking up his ivory knife to cut open the leaves, may perhaps ask.... "What have we here? two new volumes? ....And what stupendous discoveries has the author made?....Has he descried a new planet, or fresh volcanoes in the moon?.... Has he taught the use of air-balloons, and the method of guiding them through the regions of boundless space?....Has he, by beating his brain during the long winter evenings, hit upon the quadrature of the circle, the perpetual motion, the longitude at sea, the north-west passage, the southern continent, the philosopher's stone, or the *powder* for destroying insects?....Has he

exploded the old fashioned system of morals, and given Christianity the last fatal blow?....Has he proved the lawfulness of polygamy and suicide, and the beneficial effects of private vice on public happiness? ....Is the book embellished with capital prints engraved by the very best artists from originals by the painters of the Shakspeare Gallery?....Or is there any delicious abuse of the King; or of the French?.... What! nothing of this?....Nothing personal?....Nothing but general remarks on manners and letters?....Then bring the newspaper."

Indeed, reader, I would venture to say, if I were present, I cannot bring recommendations so valuable as some of these, or so contemptible as others. 'I will farther confess, that I have no private anecdotes, no public politics, no intrigues, no theatrical history, no lives and adventures of actresses and their poor inamoratos; and that I come to you with nothing but a few plain remarks on men and books, made as I travelled along the road of life, with a pocket-book and pencil in my hand, to divert myself on the journey. Such as they are, I submit them to your perusal, hoping that, as a fellow traveller, you will partake in my amusements with that good

humor which will certainly render your journey pleasanter to yourself.

"Amusement," you say, "is very desirable; but, as to the amusement of books, the world is already crouded with them." True, gentle reader; but as my volumes are not very large, there may perhaps be found a little crevice, the world, into which, provided you are really gentle and good-natured, you may find means to squeeze them. If indeed I, an individual in the numerous host of writers, should spare you this trouble, others will certainly supply my place, and you will gain little by partial severity to me. As there is no law that compels a man to read, you may enjoy your repose unmolested whenever you please, only by considering every book which you have no desire to inspect, as so much harmless waste paper.

Indeed, if you are, *bond fide*, determined to read none but such authors as Newton, Locke, and Malbranche, far be it from me to interrupt your profound studies, or to pester you with my crudities; but if you are "*unus multorum*," and find yourself inclined to send now and then for a book in boards fresh from the bookseller's, permit me to be a candidate among the rest *for the* honor of a leisure hour, while your

hair-dresser waits upon you, while you sip your hyson, or while you recline in the corner of your sopha, or your chariot.

Methinks I see you relax your brow, resume your folding knife, and resolve to look into a volume for a lounge. But why, you ask, this hackneyed miscellaneous form? I answer plainly, because it was the most agreeable to myself; but lest you should think that reason alone too selfish, I add, because I conjectured that it might be the most agreeable to you in the midst of your various studies and more important avocations. I address not my book to systematical and metaphysical doctors, to deep, erudite, and subtile sages, but to those who, without pretending to be among the seven wise men, have no objection to kill a little time, by perusing at their leisure, the pages of a modern volume.

Upon the whole, I comfort myself with the idea, that if I should unfortunately fail to entertain you, I can do you no great injury, which is more than can be predicated of all books without exception. It is far better, in my opinion, to present you with a chip in porridge than a cup of poison.

You observe by this time, and I most readily acknowledge, that I had not much

to say for myself worth attending to, in this my preface. Indeed, I entered upon it principally, as I hinted before, to shew that I was unwilling to break in upon you abruptly, and without any ceremony at all. But if the preface answers no other end, it is yet sufficiently useful in affording me an opportunity of declaring, that, though I certainly should not offer you my book, if I thought it quite unworthy of your notice, yet that I am convinced its own merits will not secure it a good reception, without an ample share of your candor. And though I have already acknowledged that I have no great opinion of the propriety or success of such requests; yet, as it can do no harm, I will take the liberty of asking the following little favor: Whatever you approve in my book, pray place to my account; but all errors and defects be so kind as attribute to the press, to haste, to inadvertence; or, pardon my freedom, to your own misapprehension; and in so doing you will oblige me greatly.

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Advertisement

TO THE

SECOND EDITION.

THIS book was first published without a name, not from any reluctance to avow the sentiments it contained; but partly from an unwillingness to obtrude a name too freequently on public notice, and partly from a desire to collect the opinions of readers uninfluenced by prepossession, either favorable or unfavorable. But in an age of restless inquiry, an author whose book is so fortunate as to be read, will in vain hope to remain concealed. My secret, unimportant as it was, and though never divulged by me, was soon discovered; and the Winter Evenings were no less confidently attributed to their real author, than if they had borne his name on their title-page.

I have great reason to be well satisfied with their reception. They have had the most honorable testimony in their favor, a very extensive circulation, unaided by the artifices of praise, and the influence of party. Their success has operated as an encouragement to improve and augment them. I have revised all the papers, and added many new ones; to make room for which, some have been obliged to recede from their place.

The division into books and chapters, which I had adopted in imitation of Aulus Gellius, whose ATTIC NIGHTS first suggested the idea of the WINTER EVENINGS, has been superseded in this edition, because it had the appearance of more formality than such miscellanies require, and was not attended with any peculiar convenience.

These are the principle alterations; and they are such as, I doubt not, the reader will approve. For *freedom of remark* on all the subjects which have fallen under my consideration, I believe, I need make no apology to the *public at large;* however a few individuals, viewing objects through the prejudices of a party, a profession, a college; or actuated by envy, anger, pride, and personal dislike, may *be offended* by it. I am unconscious of

having written one personal invective; and with respect to the liberty of general censure, a writer cannot deserve to be read, who composes with the shackles of fear about him, armed at all points with selfish caution, and consulting little but his own interest and security. How would such cowardice be treated in the army? and shall it find an asylum in the church, and in the academic cloister!

If I have written freely, I have set my name to what I have written, and am not inclined to shrink from the consequences. I may be traduced by calumny, injured by insidious malice, and insulted by the proud man's contumely; but I can bear it, because I foresaw it. Such is the usual effect of free animadversion.

——Nec rara videmus
Quæ patimur; casus multis hic cognitus——
JUV.

The ingenuity of malevolence against a successful writer, is more prolific in the invention of fiction, than the powers of poetic genius. The lies of an angry detractor are more various than the colors of the prismatic glass, more fantastic in shape than the creations of a poet's eye, which gives to airy *nothing* a local habitation

and a name. To combat them is to beat the air. Though the phantoms rise like the heads of the hydra, time usually destroys them; and to time I leave them.

I know my unreserved manner has raised me many enemies, both public and private; but I also know, and console myself in knowing, that I have not merited their enmity. It has, on the other hand, conciliated some honest friends. The freedom, indeed, of sentiment and expression which gives offence is, I am sure, in itself an honorable quality. Attempts like mine have been, and will always be, partially misunderstood and misrepresented. Success alone, even that share of it which the public in its candor, has been pleased to allow to my various endeavors, is sufficient to excite the bitter resentment of the dull, the envious, and the disappointed. But I have done my duty to the public, in writing my real sentiments in matters which greatly concern the public; and in writing without that RESERVE, which though it may promote the secular interest of the writer, militates against truth, honesty, and the liberality of an enlightened, philosophical, and philanthropic nation.

I think it a fortunate lot to live in such a nation; in a nation, whose general charac-

teristic is sincerity; in which ingenuous freedom will be honored with esteem, and where the unmerited malignity of anonymous slanderers will be compensated by the favor and support of honest-hearted Englishmen, who, above all the narrowness of local and professional prepossessions, honor truth wherever they find it.

In the present Edition, many corrections, and some additions have been made; particularly those papers which appeared in the first, but were displaced in the second to admit new ones, are here restored.

WINTER EVENINGS;
OR
LUCUBRATIONS
ON
Life and Letters.

EVENING I.

INTRODUCTORY.

IN the summer season, the warm temperature of the air, the beauty of a vivid foliage, and the smiles of universal nature, allure men from their studious retirement, and tempt them to roam in the sun-shine from flower to flower; but when the days are gradually contracted, and the cold weather causes the swallow to wing her way to more genial climes, the butterfly to retire to a warm and safe concealment, and the leaf to assume the yellow and russet tinge of autumnal decay, and at length to drop from its parent branch, the man of sentiment sympathises with the scene around him, shrinks under his roof, and into himself; and seeks that solace which the sunny hill and the verdant mead no longer afford him, at the fire-side, in the converse of those whom he loves or esteems; in an elegant and philosophical solitude, in reading, in writing, and in contemplating the productions of art during the repose of nature.

In a climate uncertain and inclement like our own, fine weather affords a great pleasure, and he who is not urged to exertion by his wants or passions, seems to acquiesce in it, and to require few other gratifications, besides the enjoyment of it unmolested. The mind is gently lulled by it to a luxurious complacency, and finds contentment in the Epicurean pleasure of a perfect inactivity. With a

mind at ease, to bask in the sun-shine, or to breathe the balsamic gale of a zephyr in the shade, is a satisfaction of the sensual kind, no less delightful than pure.

But when the mind is so well pleased without exertion, it seldom engages in study, or serious reflection, unless stimulated by ambition or necessity; and this obviously suggests a reason why books are much less required as the amusement of summer than of winter.

There seems indeed to be something in the garnish splendor of a bright sunshine rather unfavorable to contemplation. One would almost conclude, that the powers of the mind, like vapors, are dissipated in the warm months, and concentrated in the cold. Heat undoubtedly relaxes the body, and causes an inertness which disposes the mind to partake of any diversion which offers itself in the open air, rather than retire to the laborious occupations of recluse study. Cold has a contrary effect; and therefore the winter favors the operations of the mind, and induces it to exert itself with peculiar vigor.

But the length of the evenings in winter, which renders it necessary to find some sedentary and domestic diversion, may also contribute to render reading a more favorite amusement in winter than in summer. Books enable the imagination to create a summer in the midst of frost and snow, and, with the assistance of culinary fire, whose comfortable warmth supplies, round the parlor hearth, the absence of the sun, I believe the winter is considered by few as less pleasurable upon the whole than the season of soft breezes and solar effulgence.

The student shuts the door, while the chill wind whistles round his room, and the rain beats upon the tiles and pavements, stirs his fire, snuffs his candle, throws himself into his elbow chair, and defies the elements. If he chuses to transport himself to warm climates, to regions delightful as the vale of Tempé, or even to riot in all the enchanting scenes of Elysium, he has only to take a volume from his book-case, and, with every comfort of ease and safety at home, he can richly feast his capacious imagination.

I do not mean to depreciate the delights of summer; but as in this climate we have a long winter, I think it our interest to find out every consolation which the amusements peculiarly suitable to it can innocent supply, and among these I cannot but consider reading as one of the princi-

pal. The mind, the very soul, is deeply interested in this; and whatever touches with, the divine particle within us, produces a happiness, or state of enjoyment, equally substantial and refined.

In the metropolis of a rich and luxurious empire, inexhaustible sources of amusement are discovered by the ingenious activity of those who seek their maintenance by exhibiting public spectacles, by supplying music, and by convening assemblies of the young, the gay, the healthy, and the fortunate. Perhaps the evening in London is seldom employed by people of fashion, and their innumerable imitators, in the silent occupation of reading, or in the tranquil society of the domestic circle; but in the country, those who do not devote their attention to cards, find themselves compelled to seek occasional entertainment from the shelves of their book-room; and even in the great city, many from choice, from habit, from confinement, know no better way of passing away an hour in a winter evening, than by turning over miscellaneous books addressed to their reason or their fancy.*

For myself, and let the reader pardon my egotism on my first introduction, I must acknowledge, that, though I have no objection to cards in moderation, I have at the same time no taste for them. They appear to me too dull and unideal to afford a thinking man, who values his leisure, an adequate return of amusement for the time they engross. In a rural retirement, what could I do in the winter evenings, when no society interrupted, but read or write? I have done both in a vicissitude pleasant to myself, and as my inclination or my ideas of propriety suggested. In these employments I have found my time pass away, not only innocently, but pleasantly; and most of these lucubrations are literally what their title insinuates, the produce of the Winter Evenings. Let me be pardoned, if I have presumed to hope that some, in the various tribes of mankind, actuated by an infinite variety of pursuits, might spend an hour in reading, as I have in writing them, with at least so much diversion as excludes passion and

* Admovit jam Bruma foco te? *Pers.*
.....Posces librum cum lumine....et
Intendes animum studiis et rebus honestis. *Hor.*

Has winter drawn you to the fire-side?...You will call for your books and candles, and apply your mind to liberal studies and honorable pursuits.

vice, and prevents the languor of total inaction. I shall not presume to censure those who prefer whist, or the theatre; but some will prefer a book, and, in pursuit of variety, may sometimes take up mine.

As I am convinced that happiness chiefly consists in occupation, I will confess that the amusement of my Winter Evenings has been my principal design; but if, in the variety of my speculations, I have been led to treat of topics which at the same time afford improvement, I shall consider it as so much clear gain,* and as adding a real value to my production. Indeed, I am clearly of opinion, that whoever furnishes an intellectual entertainment, contributing to fill up those hours which are usually devoted to relaxation, though he should not approach with the solemn air of a professed instructor, may yet add much to public and private advantage. He may occupy vacant minds, which would otherwise deviate into vanity and vice from the want of avocation. He may engage those hours which might become burthensome, or be injuriously and disagreeably lavished in busy and trifling impertinence.

But are there not books enough already for this and for almost every other purpose? Is not the world filled with books, even to satiety? Perhaps so; but the world is wide, and readers more numerous at present than in any preceding age. Education, both liberal and confined is more general than ever, and likely to be still more extensively diffused.

The English language is the language of a vast continent of people, greatly increasing in numbers, and connecting themselves in commercial and all other engagements with all nations. English literature is of course the literature of America. The learning of England has long been flowing from the Thames to the Ganges. The authors of this island are in great repute all over Europe. So that if writers can produce works worthy of attention, there is little reason to fear a paucity of readers.

But granting that books are already too numerous, yet let it be considered, that a new book will often be read, when an old one, of equal or greater merit, will be neglected. Many old books of great excellence are become scarce, and the great number of modern readers could not

* Lucro apponam. *Hor.*
I shall set it down as clear gain.

so easily be supplied with them, even if they knew them, and valued them, as with the multiplied copies of a new publication. Many books, though they once had a great character, and are still found in libraries and catalogues, are fallen into deserved oblivion, and consequently a vacancy is made by their demise for an ambitious candidate to supply their place.

If new publications were prohibited, there is every reason to believe, that a taste for literature among the people would decline. The love of fame and the love of novelty are the great incentives of both writers and readers. The profound scholar might indeed rejoice as he pores over the Bodleian folios, that he was not pestered with new works too superficial to attract his notice; but the liberal merchant, the inquisitive manufacturer, the country gentleman, the various persons who fill the most useful departments in life, without pretending to literature, would find a copious source of pleasure and improvement rescinded. Is the innocent delight and improvement of classes, both numerous and respectable, though not professed *literati*, to be neglected? The erudition which is confined to a few libraries, or locked in the bosom of a few scholars, is of small value to the public at large, and consequently, when viewed with an eye to the general welfare of society, of little estimation. It may be compared to a stagnant pool, large perhaps and deep, but of little utility; while the knowledge which displays itself in popular works may be said to resemble a river, fertilizing, refreshing, and embellishing whole provinces, through which its delightful meanders roll their tide.

Whatever the effected pretenders to depth and solidity of science may urge, new publications will always continue to excite curiosity in a country so intelligent, so inquisitive, so free as Great Britain. In every new attempt, expectation is on tiptoe to see whether there is not some new improvement; and if she finds not all she promised herself, she usually finds something, or at least has been pleasantly occupied in the enquiry.

But if with respect to the present pages, it should be asked and answered in the words of the Roman poet,

> Quis leget hæc?...Nemo, Hercule, nemo
> Vel duo, vel nemo. *Pers.*
>
> Who'll read *such things* a 'these'?...O none will read...
> *Or one or two at most.*

If this answer should unfortunately be a true one, I may console myself with the reflection, that my lucubrations will not be entirely useless; because manufacturers concerned in the mechanical part of a work must be employed, and the trunkmakers supplied. Why may not one waste one's share of paper, that will otherwise be wasted?

> Stulta est clementia...perituræ parcere chartæ. *Juv.*
> To spare the paper...that must else be spoil'd,
> Is foolish clemency.

One advantage will certainly attend the waste occasioned by unfortunate authors, since the consumption of paper contributes greatly to the public revenue.

It is with such affected jocularity that writers endeavor to put a good face on a disappointment, which none, who ever thought it worth while to write, could consider with perfect indifference.

The good opinion of readers cannot but be grateful to writers, whatever, in the pride of their hearts, they may insinuate to the contrary. Some have pretended to find a consolatory recompence for neglect in a false contempt, and by saying with the miser in Horace,

> Populus me sibilat; at mihi plaudo
> Ipse domi.
> The people hiss;...but I myself applaud
> At home.

The philosophy, if there really be any such, which teaches an utter contempt of the opinion of mankind, is favorable to no beneficial quality, and conduces chiefly to the increase of that silly pride from which it derives its origin.

Though selfish motives of every kind should be removed, which is more than in the present state can often be true; yet whoever wishes to do good, and to afford a rational amusement, must wish to be acceptable, for without pleasing, he will find it difficult to profit.

I will make no pretensions to that superiority which considers censure and applause with equal insensibility. I confess I shall derive a sincere satisfaction from being well received by my reader. The present business of self-introduction may be a little awkward; but, before we part, I *hope to obtain* his confidence, and that he will not in any

respect be the worse for honoring me with his attention.

Introductory papers have usually been more embarrassing to writers than those which succeeded them. Ceremonies of introduction are seldom pleasant in real life; but to write on one's self and one's own views and undertakings, however pleasant to self-love, is apt to cause in the reader a considerable degree of weariness. Lest I should fairly lull him to sleep on the very first Winter Evening, which would be an inauspicious commencement, I think it would be prudent to wish him good night, and say no more about it.

I will trespass on his patience but a little longer: I find it good policy, like some of my predecessors, to defend my title from the attacks of witticism by anticipation. I desire therefore to give notice, like Mr. Fitz-Adam in the beginning of the miscellaneous paper called the World, that if any one should be disposed to say, these Winter Evenings are cold, or dark, or dull, or tedious, that more fire or more light is wanted; the joke will be considered as worn out, that it will not be allowed to pass in currency, but be cried down, like coin too light, and deficient in sterling value.

With respect to my title, which is thus exposed to the shafts of witticism, some title was necessary, and that of Winter Evenings appeared sufficiently distinctive. *Attic* Evenings, which Gellius had anticipated, would have been too ostentatious. It would have led the reader to expect a greater quantity of attic salt than I shall be able to supply, and might have tempted him to say,

> Quid tanto dignum feret hic promissor hiatu? *Hor.*
> What will this braggart bring to justify
> This boasting?

I believe it will be best to say no more about the motives which produce these Lucubrations to the public eye. I might indeed talk much of a regard for the public good. But I am of opinion, that *pro bono publico* on the front of the house, or in the beginning of a book, is rather a suspicious circumstance. Indeed, it has been observed, that the motive of any conduct rendered most ostensible often operates with least force, and that the inducement studiously disavowed or *concealed* is, in the ordinary course of

human actions, the real spring and the prime mover. The heart is certainly deceitful, and it is the safest method, if we would neither delude ourselves nor others, not arrogantly to assume any exalted superiority of principle, but to let good motives be evinced by good conduct. Whatever pretences I might make on the present occasion, it might appear perhaps, on a careful analysis, that a great portion of the moving principle consisted of mere vanity and a downright *scribendi cacoethes*. If so, though the infirmity of human nature may be lamented, yet the number of authors excited by similar causes will always keep each other in countenance. And indeed, why should people be outrageously angry with a vain and a poor writer? A man of a restless activity may, in pursuit of distinction, spend his time much more injuriously to society than in writing a foolish book. It is a consolatory reflection, that a book can neither trouble nor hurt us without our own co-operation.

> Un livre vous deplait?....Qui vous force a lire? *Boileau.*
> What! does the book displease?...Pray who compels
> To read it?

EVENING II.

OF THE TITLES OF MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS.

THAT ancient grammarian, Aulus Gellius, with a delicacy which may be deemed a little too scrupulous, is fearful lest the title of his book, Attic Evenings, should be considered as arrogant or affected, and therefore anxiously takes care to inform his reader, that his lucubrations were so called because they were written in Attica during a winter's residence in that country. He is unwilling to let it be supposed, that he intended to assume the merit of *Attic* elegance or wit, or to allure readers by the artifice of an inviting and ostentatious title.

After making his own apology, he proceeds to censure the affectation of titles assumed in ancient times by the writers of miscellanies; and though his strictures on them are generally just, yet he too severely condemns some, which are not deficient either in a decent humility, or in *the propriety* of their application.

I think it may afford amusement to the English reader to view some of the inventions of classical authorship in that important part of a work, the fabrication of a *Title Page*. Many of them have been borrowed and greatly embellished by the moderns, in the hope of attracting notice by the first page; as the innkeeper invites the traveller by a gilded Bacchus, a Tun and a Bunch of Grapes, and the tempting inscription, "Good Entertainment for Man and Horse."

The title of the MUSES, as Aulus Gellius informs us, was sometimes given to poetical miscellanies, by which the poet rather arrogantly insinuated that his work was peculiarly favored by the inspiring Nine. But it was by no means confined to poetry. I believe, indeed, it more frequently occurred in history, where Herodotus had set the example of it, by distinguishing each of his books by the name of *a Muse*. Some critics acquit Herodotus of the apparent arrogance, and suppose that these elegant appellations were bestowed on his books by his sanguine admirers, in ages long after the writer was no more.

THE GRACES were the names bestowed on three orations of Æschines, to which the beauty of their language is said to have given them a just claim; but this title must not be imputed to the author's vanity, as it is reasonable to believe that it was the voluntary reward of the reader's approbation.

SYLVÆ is one of the most elegant, as well as commonest titles prefixed to the miscellanies of the ancients. The origin of it is in the Greek HYLE; and the authors who first assumed it, modestly intimated by it, that they had collected a store of *timber* or materials, which themselves, or others, might hereafter use in erecting a regular structure. The SYLVÆ of Statius are said by the critics to be more valuable than his finished compositions. In imitation of him many modern writers of Latin poetry have entitled the miscellaneous parts of their books, SYLVÆ; and our own Ben Johnson, alluding to the ancient title of *Sylvæ*, denominates some of his smaller works, *Underwoods*. He entitles his *observations on men and things*, TIMBER; which must appear unaccountably singular to the unlearned reader, and is in truth not a little pedantic. He adds in Latin, the following marginal explanation: The *book is called*, says he, *Timber*, SYLVA,

HYLE, *from the multiplicity and variety of matter which it contains ; for as we commonly call an indefinite number of trees growing together indiscriminately,* A WOOD ; *so the ancients entitled those of their books, in which little miscellaneous pieces were irregularly arranged,* SYLVAS, *or Timber-trees.*

QUINTILIAN describes the works distinguished by the name of SYLVÆ, as struck out with the impulse of a sudden calenture, *subito excussa calore,* and assigns causes for the appellation similar to those which have been already mentioned.

If the name should be differently interpreted, and understood to suggest the pleasantness and variety of a *wood,* abounding with every diversity of foliage, and displaying many a sweet floweret in all the beautiful wildness of Nature; SYLVA, *the Wood, the Grove,* or *the Forest,* would not be improper titles for a *miscellany,* provided it were of merit enough to answer the expectation of beauty and diversity which such titles might justly raise.

PEPLON, or PEPLOS, *the Mantle,* was prefixed to works consisting of detached pieces on various subjects. *The Peplon,* according to the description of Potter, was a white garment without sleeves, embroidered with gold, and representing the exploits of Minerva, particularly in the battles of the Giants against Jupiter ; but though this was originally the only subject, it was not retained so exclusively as not to admit the embroidery of other figures which had no relation to it. In process of time the heroes of Athens, after an important victory, were delineated upon it with sumptuous elegance, to be exhibited at the grand festival of Minerva, as an honorary reward of past merit, and an incitement to future. Hence arose the idea of distinguishing with the name *Peplon* such books or poems as described the atchievements of great warriors. Aristotle wrote a poem of this kind, and called it *The Peplon.* It comprized the lives and death of the most illustrious of his countrymen. Every history concluded with an epitaph of two lines. The loss of the *Stagirite's Peplon* is an irreparable injury to the Grecian history, and to polite letters. It may not be improper to add, that when the Greeks expressed their highest approbation of a hero, it was a proverbial saying among them, *He is worthy of the Peplon.*

But the word was not applied only to the *Peplon* of Minerva. It signified the external vestment of any dignified lady; and from the description of it, may be imagined to resemble the modern or oriental shawl. The ladies of Greece displayed their singular ingenuity in decorating it with the richest and most picturesque delineations which their manual ingenuity could produce; and the art of the weaver, the dyer, and the engraver, had not then superseded the fine operations of the needle.

The poet therefore, who assumed this title, promised his readers every variety of the most vivid coloring and picturesque imagery. He called them to view a richly figured tissue, *a mantle* embroidered with gold and purple. I should think the title more properly appropriated to the works of the Sapphos than of the Aristotles, though Aristotle adopted it. We have, I believe, many ladies in our own country who could with equal ease and elegance produce *a Peplon* in its literal or its figurative sense.

A miscellaneous author of antiquity, who wished to convey the idea of great exuberance and inexhaustible variety, denominated his work KERAS AMALTHEIAS, or *the Horn of Amalthea*, which will be more generally understood if I render it THE CORNUCOPIA. The pretty fable of Jupiter's rewarding Amalthea the nurse who fed him with goat's milk in his infancy, by giving her a horn of the goat, from which she should be able to take whatever she wanted, gave rise to this title, and to the idea of the *Cornucopia*, which is now familiar to the illiterate. As a title it was too ostentatious, and savored something of the vain pretensions of empiricism.

A *Hive* and a *Honeycomb* conveyed at once the idea of industry and taste in the collector, and of sweetness in the collection. It is obvious to conclude therefore, that the Greek work KERION would become the title of miscellaneous books; and if the books were merely compilations from the works of others, I can see in it no impropriety. But that a man should compare his *own* works to *honey*, and invite the reader by his title to taste the *luscious store*, is a degree of self-conceit which may perhaps justify the censure and the contempt of Gellius.

LIMON, or *the Meadow*, was a pleasing title given by the ancients to works variegated with all the colors of a fertile imagination. It affords the reader cause to expect

flowers richly interspersed; cowslips, violets, blue-bells; verdure, softness, fragrance, and plenty. I imagine it to have been chiefly applied to poetry. I remember to have seen a small collection of juvenile poems by that polite scholar, Sir William Jones, to which he has given the title of *Limon*, in imitation of those ancients whom he admires with warmth, and imitates with peculiar taste.

To mark their *miscellaneous compositions*, every title which could express a collection of flowers has been adopted both by the ancients and moderns: hence *Anthera*, *Florilegium*, *Anthologia*, *Polyanthœa*; hence also the *Nosegay*, the *Garland*, the *Wreath*, the *Chaplet*, and *toon*.

LYCHNUS, or the *Torch*, another title mentioned by Gellius, sufficiently pointed out a book which was to diffuse light; but it falls under the imputation of arrogance, and, like EUREMATA, *Discoveries* (which Ben Johnson has adopted), raises our expectation to a dangerous eminence.

STROMATEUS, or the *Carpet*, resembles the *Peplon*. PINAX or *Pinakidion*, the *Picture*, conveyed an obvious yet pleasing idea. PANDECTE, though chiefly applied to collections of law, extended also to miscellaneous books o polite literature, and seems intended to signify something like the monthly magazines, as the word might be rendered in the modern style, *the Universal Repository* or general *Receptacle*.

ENCHIRIDION, *the Manual*, or rather *the little Dagger*, was a common title to works of small magnitude comprehending things of great moment. In its proper sense it was the small sword, which the soldiers wore constantly at their sides for personal defence against any sudden assault. Applied to a book, it signified a little treatise always at hand, comprehending arguments for occasional defence and constant security. The *Enchiridion* of Epictetus was a compendium of his philosophy, in a *pocket volume*, as *a pocket Companion*, no less convenient to refute the gain-sayers, than a pocket pistol, to repel a thief or assassin, or than a pocket cordial, to exhilarate the spirits upon any occasional depression.

But enough of ancient titles. If Aulus Gellius had lived in modern times, I believe he would have considered the titles which he has stigmatized with the appellation of

Festivitates Inscriptionum, diverting and absurd Titles, modest and unassuming in comparison with some which it would be easy, though rather invidious, to enumerate in the English language. Popular theology, in the days of the Puritans, exhibited some titular curiosities; such as, *Crums of Comfort*, a *Shove, Looking-glasses, Path-ways, Ladders, Doors, Cordials, Jewels*, and many others, which excite a smile, or would offend modern delicacy. Though most incongruous to the seriousness of rational divinity they are chiefly prefixed to religious books. I believe the authors were truly sincere in the doctrines they taught; but, if they had intended to ridicule what they reverenced, they could not have devised a more successful expedient than the drollery of a quaint and ludicrous title-page.

That works addressed to the illiterate should be recommended by a pompous title-page, is not wonderful. Their sagacious editors know that vulgar minds are captivated by bold pretensions and warm professions in literature as in medicine. Since the artifice is an innocent one, and succeeds in recommending useful books among those by whom instruction is greatly wanted; while, at the same time, it is too apparent to deceive the well educated and sensible, it deserves not the severity of satire, though it must of necessity excite some degree of derision. For splendor and copiousness of panegyrical epithet, no age can produce a parallel to many of the curious titles and commendations printed on the blue covers of works delivered to the expecting world in weekly numbers. Language toils in vain for expressions adequate to the excellence of the compositions, the beauty of the type and paper, and the superb elegance of the copper-plates. Grand, imperial, magnificent, unparalleled, are the beggarly epithets which the editors are compelled to use from the deficiency of language. All this is laughable; but it is found to introduce a Bible, or a System of Geography, or a History of England, into the family of some poor mechanic, who spends, on Saturday for an improving or entertaining book, that sixpence which might otherwise be lavished in riot and intemperance.

In the higher ranks of literature, I know not that any peculiar affectation in titles is at present observed to pre-

made them very agreeable; but *repetatur haustus* has been so frequently put on the labels by succeeding practitioners, that the salutary cordial, the *confectio cardiaca*, though rendered as sweet as syrup, operates at last like a dose of ipecacuanha.

Yet every mode of introducing an air of novelty has been tried by the periodical writers. Allegories, Diaries, Eastern Tales, Little Novels, Letters from Correspondents, Humor, Irony, Argument, and Declamation, have been used to vary the form of conveying periodical instruction. These contrivances were successful, till the repetition of the same modes of diversification caused a nausea.

The Spectator himself talked so much about the dress of the fair sex, that, as tradition informs us, his readers began to be weary, and wished him to take his leave. What his animadversions on tuckers, petticoats, and fans, might effect among our grand-mothers, I do not know; but at present all such papers, though they may raise a smile, seem to produce little attention, and no reformation.

But though the modes of conveying instruction may lose their estimation by continual recurrence, yet instruction itself can never be depreciated, if it is founded on the solid basis of experience and sound reason; and perhaps the best method of conveying it, is that which is plainly addressed to the understanding, without any quaint contrivance, or laborious attempt at novelty of form, which too often terminates in a disgusting affectation. In an Eastern tale, for instance, one may be pleased with the language, with the imagery, with the ingenuity of the invention; but as to the moral instruction to be derived from it, it would at present be more agreeable and efficacious, if delivered in plain terms, without those visible and palpable artifices which are now become trite and trivial.

Allegories also are now, from their frequency, more valuable for the diction and splendid figures which the fancy of the writer paints, than for their moral efficacy; which I believe in a lettered age might be better accomplished in a manner less indistinct and operose.

Evident imitation, if unsuccessful, becomes contemptible; and even if it resemble its original, it is still consi-

dered, like a good copy of a fine picture, as of very subordinate value, and seldom continues to please long after its first appearance. Diaries of Belles and Beaus, Extraordinary Intelligence, Cross Readings of newspapers, are now worn thread-bare. Indeed, every mode of humor, which the Spectator adopted, has been imitated so often as to have lost something of its grace.

But the plain and unaffected manner of uttering ideas and sentiments can never be out of fashion; because it is the very manner which nature requires and common sense adopts. Apparel can never be out of fashion, though the cut of a coat, and the shape of a shoe-buckle, may vary every month. It is the great advantage of adhering to nature in the works of art, that what was once excellent will always be so; what once gave a rational pleasure will continue to give it, like a natural spring which, though it may not throw its waters into so great a variety of forms as the artificial fountain of the engineer, will continue to supply an exuberant stream, when the scanty canal is exhausted or the machinery destroyed.

> Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis, ævum. *Hor.*
> *It flows and will for ever flow.*

Good sense, expressed in good language, interesting subjects of learning, familiarized to the curious, or rendered agreeable to the idle, cannot fail of being acceptable in general, though they should appear in the unadorned dress of a direct appeal to the reason; while, in the imitative garb of preceding writers, they are in danger of becoming ridiculous or irksome.

The compound names signed by pretended correspondents to suppositious letters in periodical works become nauseous by continual imitation. The Spectator has a great number of them, and they were entertaining enough for once; but who can bear, without exclaiming, *Ohe jam satis est!* the never-ceasing iteration of such as Kitty Termagant, Susanna Frost, Ralph Crotchett, Abraham Spy, Mary Meanwell, Rebecca Nettletop, Eve Afterday, which occur to me in a moment on casually opening a volume of the Spectator? Imitation of things so easily imitable produces only the flat and the vapid. It is better to communicate the sentiments intended to be conveyed by these characters and names without a veil, than

with one so transparent and so antiquated, as neither to serve the purpose of a covering nor of an ornament.

The pourtraying of characters in Greek and Latin names, such as Curio, Gelasimus, Belinda, Opsinous, though a very convenient mode of conveying instruction, begins, from its everlasting use, to be rather dull. It was at first a lively way of speaking an author's thoughts in an imaginary character. But the method is so common, that the natural way of addressing the reader is now more agreeable and effectual. When fictitious names were first used, the reader was sometimes, usefully for himself deceived into an opinion, that a real character was concealed under the masque; but he now knows, as well as the author, that it is only an obvious imitative trick, used when invention is at a loss to diversify the discourse.

It is the imitation, for ever repeated, of mere modes of conveying ideas, which renders periodical papers of great merit rather distasteful. Good thoughts delivered in this miscellaneous manner cannot fail of being agreeable, when the reader is not palled with attempts to please him by mere tricks, which he has been so much accustomed to already, as not to be in the least pleased by them, but rather to consider them as impediments to the main business, the discovery of the doctrine, the main scope and opinion of the author.

The insertion of letters from pretended correspondents in miscellaneous papers is a convenient mode of expressing some ideas and characters, which an author could not so well or so probably express in his own person. It may be allowed for its convenience; but, when unnecessary, it ceases at present to please, because the artifice is visible, and no longer leaves the reader in doubt whether the letter comes from a real correspondent; which was originally an useful deception. The reader knows, that he who sends, and he who receives and comments on the letter, is for the most part, the same person; and if he looks at the signature, he may give a shrewd guess what is the subject, as the name is commonly a compound of the epithets or words which describe the character. But I must take care here (for *Cynthius aurem vellit)* not to lay down a law which will operate against myself; for, in the course of these Winter Evenings, I shall sometimes

have occasion for a country or a London correspondent, and must solicit the reader's indulgence.

Indeed the whole plan of diurnal essays has been so frequently pursued, as to be in danger of causing that effect which a satiety, even of excellence, is too apt to produce on human nature, one of whose strongest appetites is a desire of novelty.

But if affectation, and too servile an imitation, are avoided, there can be no rational objection to communicating ideas on any subject of morality, learning, science, arts, or taste, in short miscellaneous treatises. Modes may be disgustful, but truth and reason must continue to give satisfaction, whether communicated in the form and under the title of diurnal or periodical essays, or of long, just, and legitimate dissertations.

Dissertations and systems are properly addressed to one kind of readers; but not to all. They are improving and delightful to professed students; while to the general reader, they appear heavy and tedious. *Laudant illa, sed ista legunt.* They praise and admire learned and grave writings, but they read those which are more familiar.

Readers may indeed be subdivided into a thousand different classes; but in a comprehensive division they may be separated into the professional, philosophical, and miscellaneous.

Professional readers, those who read either to qualify for the assumption of a profession, or to regulate the conduct and exercise of one already assumed, require regular and complete treatises, according to Aristotle's description, with a beginning, a middle, and an end. However tedious and dull, they must go through such books as furnish, in any way, stores of professional knowledge. Their reading is a duty. They must proceed in the appointed road, like the stage coach, whether the sky be clear or clouded, and whether the country, and prospects around it, be pleasant or dreary. They must drink at the fountain head, whether the water flow copiously in spontaneous streams, or whether it must be drawn from the well by persevering and painful labor.

Philosophical readers, those whose abilities, opportunities, and ambition, lead them to attempt improvements in science, must also penetrate to the *interiora rerum*,

and cut through rocks and mountains, like Hannibal, in ascending the eminences to which they aspire. They are not to be diverted in their progress, by listening, like the shepherd, to the purling of the streamlet and the song of the nightingale, nor by culling the cowslip of the meadows. Their very toil is a delight to them; and they come forth at last Bacons, Boyles, Lockes, and Newtons.

But the *miscellaneous readers* are certainly the most numerous; and, as they form not only a majority, but a very respectable part of mankind, their literary wants are worthy of supply. They consist of all conditions, of the young and the old, the gentleman and the merchant, the soldier, the mariner, the subordinate practitioner in medicine and law, of those who hold places in public offices, even of the philosopher and professor, in their leisure hours; and lastly, though not the least numerous or important, of the *ladies*. A beard was once the mark of a philosopher; but in the present age it is not uncommon to see wisdom and taste united with a fine assemblage of features in the most delicate female face. Such students are not to be sent to dull libraries, to strain their fine eyes over worm-eaten folios larger than their band-boxes.

This being a commercial country, let us suppose the case of a merchant, whose education has been liberal, and whose turn of mind gives him a taste for the pleasure of polite letters. His time is much occupied by the necessary employments of his counting-house. He must write letters, attend the Exchange, and see company; yet he has a love for books, and wishes to spend some time every day in his book room. He goes to his villa in the evening, and remains there a day or two: when some weighty concern calls for all his attention. In a life of business, with little leisure, and with that little liable to interruption, shall he read folios and dry treatises, in the Aristotelian style and regularity? He wishes he could perhaps; but he reads for amusement chiefly, and he requires something which he can read, comprehend in a short time, and relinquish without weariness. What so well adapted as an elegant miscellany? and hence it is that the Spectator, one of the first books calculated for universal use, was universally read in the mercantile classes, and still continues in high estimation.

"*The* PHILOSOPHER teacheth," says Sir Philip Syd-

ney, "but he teacheth obscurely, so as the learned "only can understand him; that is to say, *he teacheth "them that are already taught.*"—For the people, there must be a POPULAR philosopher; and he must address them, not like a professor in the dreary schools of an antiquated university, but like Socrates, walking among the people, and familiarizing his doctrines to the understanding and taste of those who are found in the ship, the warehouse, the Exchange, the office, and even the manufactory. Life, at all times, in every part, under every passion and every action, admits of moral philosophy. It is not necessary that there should always be a professor's chair, a pulpit, a school, a formal lecture; since at the table, in the parlor, in the garden, in the fields, there is occasion and opportunity for familiar instruction. A pocket volume, an Enchiridion, or a Manual, accompanies the reader in his walks, in his chariot, in the coffee-house, and in all the haunts of busy man.

Miscellanies indeed of this sort, if any thing but their own utility is necessary to recommend them, are not without the sanction of ancient examples. All works which bear the title of *Saturæ*, are miscellaneous. What are Seneca's Epistles but moral miscellanies? What are Plutarch's *Opuscula?* What Horace's *Sermones?* None of them systematical treatises, but popular essays, highly pleasing and improving to the people at large, for whom they were designed. I could enlarge the list by the Deipnosophists of Athenæus, the Saturnalia of Macrobius, and many works of the grammarians, or professed *literati* of early ages. Nor let the grave and austere despise them as trifling amusements only; for the mind is nourished by variety of food, the *farrago libelli* like the body by a commixture of fish, flesh, fowl, and vegetables.

If a writer is happy enough to present his reader with good sense, with sound and just reasoning well expressed, his work can never be entirely antiquated; because reason, the internal man, like the external, must always continue the same. Men may be disgusted with the tricks of cookery, and sick of made dishes fancifully seasoned and constantly served up; but substantial food will always be relished by guests whose palates are not vitiated by disease.

That form *in which the* ideas of a miscellaneous writer

can be most clearly and agreeably exhibited, is certainly to be preferred ; but every proper ornament of style and method may be judiciously applied, without having recourse to little arts which have lost their grace and power by being so frequently used already, as to be anticipated, and even loathed by the reader, who is apt to yawn over them and exclaim,

> Tædet harum quotidianarum formarum. *Ter.*
> I'm sick of this dull dose of daily trash.....

EVENING IV.

ON THE TENDENCY OF LETTERS AS A PROFESSION TO PROMOTE INTEREST.

SIR William Jones, whose early acquaintance with oriental learning, and premature accomplishments in all polite letters, promised an uncommon eminence in the maturer periods of his life, laments, in one of his last publications, that the profession of letters, though laborious, leads to little pecuniary benefit ; and that it seldom contributes to elevate, in the ranks of civil life, either the professor or his family. He therefore takes a tender leave of the beloved region of the Muses, and,

> .....Desertis Aganippes
> Vallibus, *Juv.*
> The muses vale forsaken,

offers himself a votary of wealth and honor in the profession of the law. He relinquishes the barren hill of Parnassus, and seems to be cultivating with success a richer field.

The first love is not easily forgotten ; and Sir William, amidst his severer studies, still pays great attention to his old friends the Muses, and the public will probably be gratified with many flowers of Asiatic growth, selected by his elegant taste.

But what he so feelingly lamented is certainly true. The finest compositions, the most laborious works of mere literature, would never have made him a judge, or raised *him one* step on the ladder of ambition. As children

admire the peacock's plumage, and wish to pluck a feather from his tail; so the great, who have sense enough, admire fine writing, and derive a pleasure which costs them little from the perusal of it. They read, are pleased; they praise, and forget the author. Their interest must be exerted, not to patronize letters, but to pay the tutor of their children at the public expence; or to secure parliamentary votes by bartering for them the cure of souls, or the dignified cushion of some rich cathedral. "Such an one," say they, "is an excellent poet, and I hear the poor man is in narrow circumstances; but really every thing in my gift has been engaged to the members for two or three boroughs, and the minister's list for prebendaries has been for some time filled with the travelling companions and domestic tutors of several young lords who will have great weight in both houses. I wish I could do something for so ingenious a man; but there is nothing to be done for ourselves in parliament without these sugarplums to give away. The church indeed furnishes plenty of them, but still they are all engaged, and the hungry mouths seem to multiply faster than the douceurs can be supplied. I most heartily wish Mr. Bayes well, and, if he publishes by subscription, he may set my name down for a copy which he need not send me; but any thing more at present it is out of my power to do for him."

Thus the writer who perhaps has more ability, and who has certainly been more industrious than many, in a lucrative or high political employment, is considered in the light of a mendicant, and even then dismissed to his cell, without reward, to mourn over the ingratitude and venality of the world.

To seek learning and virtue is one thing, and to seek preferment and patronage another. The pursuits are often incompatible; and let not him repine at the want of patronage who has been, in his study and among his books, when he should have been, consistently with the pursuit of patronage and preferment, at a levee or a parliamentary election. If he were to write successfully in politics, or to manage a newspaper full of falshood and virulent calumny, he might get something, when his party should prevail int he grand contest for power and profit. But poetry, history, science, morality, divinity, make no votes in a borough, and add no strength to a party;

are every body's business, and for that reason, according to a vulgar remark, to reward them is the care of nobody.

If he had employed his time in engrossing deeds as an attorney, or in posting books as a merchant or banker, or in driving a quill in the East Indies, he might have been by this time a member of parliament by purchase, and then by voting for a number of years for himself, and talking two or three hours plausibly on the right side for his own interest, have sat down at last with a coronet on his head. As a writer on general literature only, in which all men are concerned, he would still have continued in his garret, though the whole nation should have been improved and entertained by his labors, and future generations may receive from them equal pleasure and advantage.

The lucre of literary works falls chiefly to the lot of the venders of them; and the most eminent writers, who have nothing but what their works bring them, would be likely to starve. There are instances, indeed, of literary drudges, who, undertaking mere compilations and low works of little ingenuity and invention, have gained a livelihood; but a man of genius can never stoop to such employment, unless through mere necessity; and then being in a state of servitude, and unable to chuse his own subjects, and the manner of treating them, his spirit evaporates, his fire is damped, and he becomes a mere hireling, seeking gain and disregarding reputation.

Publishing by subscription in the present state of things, is a species of beggary. A man of that independent spirit which marks great abilities, had rather engage himself in a handicraft employment than crave the subscriptions of those who pretend to despise his book, however valuable, and though they cannot understand it, merely because it has solicited their reluctant contribution. Poverty, and a starving family may urge a man to ask subscriptions in this age, for it is certainly rather less ignominious than house-breaking, and attended with much less hazard to the person. But would not his time, his ability, and his industry, exerted in a counting-house or in a shop, have obtained a better reward for him, with less contumely? All I contend to establish is, that they who study *letters*, as mere *literati*, without a profession, will usually derive from them little to gratify their avarice or am-

bition." Sir William Jones's doctrine and conduct in relinquishing a life of letters for a life of business, are founded on actual observation of the living world, and the state of things in the present age.

Many contend that there should be certain public rewards appropriated by government to literary merit. I fear they would be bestowed by interest and party either on very moderate, or on no merit; like some of the professorships in the universities; like the Gresham professorships in London; like doctors degrees; like many sinecures, for which the qualification consists solely in the ability to procure them.

Who in such a case should be the judge and the awarder of the prize? Contemporaries often behold living merit through the false medium either of envy or national prejudice. If a writer were rewarded by one party, another would from that moment exert itself to depreciate his character, his abilities, and his works; so that a man of real modesty and merit, who valued his fame or his peace, would often wish to decline the emolument, which would then fall to some bold and empty pretender. How much envy and detraction have been occasioned by the pensions bestowed upon a few in the present reign? A man who gains an income equal to the best of them in a low trade, thanks nobody but God, and his own industry, for it; but the pensioned, or patronized author, has an everlasting debt of gratitude to pay, is frequently doomed to unmanly submission, and surrounded by enviers who leave nothing unattempted to lessen his happiness and lower his fame.

Then welcome a competent mediocrity, with liberty and peace! Let the man of genius love his muse, and his muse shall reward him with sweet sensations; with pictures and images of beautiful nature, and with a noble generosity of spirit, which can look down with pity, contempt, or total indifference, on patrons who have often as little sense to understand, as liberality to reward him.

Milton was poor and unpatronized, and so was Shakspeare. A miserable pittance bought that poem which is one of the first honors, not only of this nation, but of human nature. But is it not credible, that Milton and Shakspeare had internal delights, a luxury of soul, which is unknown to the dull tribe who are often reward-

ed with pensions and promotion, and which many patrons, with all their pomp and power, would envy, if they were capable of conceiving the exquisite pleasure?

Let the republic of letters be ever free; and let no bribery and corruption prevail in it. Where patronage interferes, independence is too often destroyed. I except the noble instance of Mr. Dyson's patronage of the poet Akenside.

Writing, it may be said, made Addison a minister of state. It raised Prior to public employment from abject obscurity. Burnet, Somers, Locke, Davenant, Steele, and others in former days, owed their wealth and elevation to their pen. Their success occasioned such numerous competitors, that they injured each other. The public was often glutted. Patriots or courtiers found other ways to effect their purposes than persuasion and argument, invective or panegyric. The prevalence of corruption rendered the assistance of argument less necessary, but still politics are the best field for writers who mean only to serve their own interest, and to improve their worldly condition.

But no kind of writing in the present age is peculiarly fit for making a fortune. Auctioneers, dancing-masters, quack doctors, dentists, balloonists, actresses, opera dancers, equestrian performers, perfumers, these are they whom the British nation either honors with fame, or rewards with affluence. "He that can tell his money hath arithmetic enough" (says an old writer) "he is a geome-"trician that can measure out a good fortune to himself; "a perfect astrologer that can cast the rise and fall of "others, and mark their errant motion to his own use. "The best optics are to reflect the beams of some great "man's favor to shine upon him."

With respect indeed to employing abilities on general subjects of morals and literature, in which no particular party or sect is interested, one must say, with an ingenious writer,

"Whoever is resolved to employ his hours and his "labor in this manner, should consider himself as one who "lays out his fortune in mending *the high-ways*. MANY "ARE BENEFITED, AND FEW ARE OBLIGED. If "he escapes obloquy, it is very well.

"Triumpho, si licet, latere tecto, abscedere."
"To escape with safety is a triumph."

And yet such labors alone usually descend to posterity, and such chiefly produce permanent advantage to the public. Who regards the petty controversies of little sectaries, or even the violent struggles of public statesmen and politicians, after the lapse of half a century?

Happy then are they who, free from sordid motives, seek excellence without regard to its recompence. They will not be without their reward in the final result of things; and, indeed, their internal satisfaction is more than a recompence for the want of secular emolument and honor.

EVENING V.

ON THE USE AND ABUSE OF MARGINAL NOTES AND QUOTATIONS.

THE laborious writers of the last century presented most of their works to the public in bulky folios, with a small letter, a large page, a narrow margin, and a great abundance of notes and citations. It was the literary fashion of the time; but the fashion is so much altered, that though the margins are now usually large enough to admit a greater quantity in notes and quotations than the text itself amounts to, yet you may read works consisting of many volumes without stumbling on a single quotation, or finding the uniformity of the beautiful page violated by one marginal comment. Formerly, as you journeyed through a book, elucidations in the margin attended your progress like lamps by the road side: but now, it may be presumed, books shine like phosphorus, or the glow-worm, with inherent lustre, and require not the assistance of extrinsic illumination.

That I approve of quotations myself, is evident from my practice; though I have not been without hints, that books would be more saleable without Latin and Greek; the very sight of which, I am told, is apt to disgust those who have forgotten the attainments of the grammar school. But if a passage which I have read occurs to my mind while I am writing, down it goes; and I have the consola-

tion, that if it displeases some, it may possibly please others. Of one good effect I am secure: it has pleased myself; and I have honestly confessed, that my own amusement has ever formed a very considerable part of my motives both to write and to transcribe.

But seriously, there appear to be some just objections to the old fashion which crowded the page with passages from various authors, and interrupted the context by references continually occuring even to satiety.

The reader, it may be said, either attends to them, or he does not; if he attends to them, not perhaps being able sufficiently to regard two things at once, he neglects the context for the notes, or, at least, loses that ardor, which he may have contracted in continued uninterrupted reading, and which probably would have contributed more to his improvement than any side lights derived from the commentary. If he resolves not to attend to them at all, in consequence of his opinion that they may be an impediment to his purpose, they might, so far as he is concerned, have been entirely omitted, and the book would have been a less evil by being of less magnitude.

Notes and quotations are often in languages unknown to the English reader, and then they conduce to no other end but to offend and to mortify him. I have no doubt but that many English books have been injured in their sale and circulation by the Latin and Greek notes with which they abounded. Many persons of good sense, and well informed understanding, do not chuse to be reminded, on every page, of their ignorance of ancient languages, and are a little afraid of being asked by their children or others, the meaning of passages which they cannot explain, whatever sense and judgment they possess.

Notes and quotations are often inserted ostentatiously and improperly. Many authors seem to be more anxious in the display of their own attainments, than in convincing or entertaining their readers. A few Greek words, and a little Hebrew, conduce very much to raise the admiration of the ignorant or half learned, who know not with what ease pompous quotations are made by means of Indexes, Dictionaries, *Florilegia*, *Spicilegia*, *Eelogæ* and *Synopses*.

It is, I believe, by no means uncandid to suppose, that *quotations* have been thus easily and craftily multiplied to

swell a volume, and to increase its price. The artifice in this case deserves the indignation of the reader, as it resembles the fraud of the huckster, who, in vending his fruit, makes use of a measure, half filled with extraneous matter, or with a false bottom placed in the middle of it. If the context of such writers may be compared to the kernel of the nut, the notes and quotations may be said to resemble the husk, yet, by a preposterous disproportion, the husk often contains a much greater quantity than the kernel. Who can wonder if, in such a case, the disgusted reader throws away both the kernel and the shell?

But though something may be said against notes, quotations, and mottoes; yet more, I believe, may be advanced in their favor. If a reader thinks them of little use, or does not understand them, it is easy to neglect them. It is true that they occupy a space on the page, and increase the size of the volume; but these are inconveniences of little consequence, compared with the pleasure and information which they afford to scholars and attentive readers.

A reader is often referred in the margin to another author who has treated the same subject better or more fully, or in a different style, so as to afford additional information or new amusement.

If the passage be transcribed and inserted in the volume before him, the reader is able to consider it without the trouble of recurring to his library; a pleasant circumstance, which saves both time and trouble, and which, I should think, cannot fail of being agreeable to the indolent student of modern times, who only reads on his sopha over his chocolate, or as he lolls in a carriage, or sits under the hands of the hair-dresser.

It often happens that the quotations constitute the most valuable part of a book, and the reader may then rejoice that he has not spent his money and time in vain; which, peradventure, he might have done, had the author inserted nothing but his own production.

Though notes, quotations, and mottoes may be very easily selected and multiplied by means of indexes and dictionaries; yet there is reason to conclude, that a writer who applies them *properly*, must have read, or be capable of reading, the authors from whom they are borrowed; and, in these times of universal authorship, it is some com-

fort to a reader to know that his author is a little acquainted with ancient learning, and able to drink at the fountains of philosophy. Ignorance may sometimes wear the mask of learning, but not constantly. A shrewd observer will discover it from the awkwardness of the wearer.

The more numerous the ideas which a volume furnishes, the more valuable it is to be considered; as that garden or orchard is the best which abounds in the greatest plenty and variety of fruits and flowers. Some of the fruits and flowers are indeed exotic; but if the flowers are beautiful, sweet-scented, and curious, and the fruit rich and high flavored, who can complain but the peevish and discontented? You entered the garden in expectation of the common productions of this climate, and you are agreeably surprised with the magnolia and the pine-apple.

The art of cookery has often been used to illustrate the art of criticism: and though many may prefer plain food, and say,

> Pane egeo, jam pontificum potiore placentis. *Hor.*
> Plain bread, I want; than daintiest cakes
> To me more acceptable;

yet the majority will approve a rich cake, heightened and improved with ingredients not necessary to constitute the substance of a cake, because, as the logicians say, they might be present or absent without the loss of the subject *(adesse vel abesse sine subjecti interitu;)* but yet, who could with justice blame the cook for adding plums and sweetmeats Many have not a taste for such sweet things, it may be said; but while the majority have, and while it is natural, the cook must remain without censure. Let those who like it not, refuse it; but let them not condemn the composition, when their own want of taste is to blame.

While mottoes and quotations are added with judgment, and in a limited length and number, they must be considered as valuable additions or pleasant ornaments; neither would I censure an author for inserting in his works curious and valuable passages which he has met with in his reading, any more than the traveller who adorns his house, his stair-case, or parlor, with the productions which he has collected in his voyages; they might indeed *be spared; they* are not necessary, like the bed, the

chairs, and the tables, but like paintings, they are ornamental and amusing to the fancy, instructive to the understanding, and, in some measure, prove the traveller's authenticity.

But while I approve of judicious mottoes and quotations, I must join in reprobating artful and pedantic writers, who crowd their pages with Greek and Latin, merely to exalt themselves in the eyes of the ignorant, and to gratify their vanity. The affectation and crafty accumulation of second-hand sentences on one side, is no less contemptible than the pride of many superficial authors on the other, who call themselves philosophers, but who scorn to light their tapers at the torches of the ancients; who therefore write volumes without a single Latin or Greek word, confidently relying on the solidity and copiousness of their own doctrines: Heroic souls in their own estimation! Some, however, with a detracting voice, will whisper, that the true reason of their totally declining to quote Greek and Latin is, that they understand only their mother tongue.

Quotations have been often misapplied by sceptical and infidel writers for the most dishonorable purposes, to give weight and authority to falshood in the attack of the received religion. An historian, who has spoiled his book by endeavoring to explode Christianity, has been found guilty, by several ingenious answerers, of misquoting, misrepresenting, and mistranslating passages from ancient authors, whom he endeavored to compel into his service as auxiliaries. But nothing is to be wondered at in one who admires *Nero* for generosity and humanity.

Quotations can then only be objected to with reason when they exceed in length and number, when they mislead the reader by misapplication, when they are neither illustrative nor ornamental, but inserted solely from the motive of pedantic ostentation, or some other sinister inducement. Objections to them arising from idleness, ignorance, or caprice, deserve no notice. They are justified by reason, and by the example of the greatest authors.

The English reader is usually desirous to see Latin and Greek quotations translated. They often disappoint him; because much of their beauty and force arises from the original language. Queen Caroline commanded Dr. John Clarke to translate the numerous and fine quotations

in Wollaston's Religion of Nature; he obeyed the Queen, and the quotations were murdered by royal authority.

EVENING VI.

ON THE PERSONALITY OF POETICAL SATIRISTS.

MR. Pope has introduced a harmony of verse which, however difficult to invent, is imitated with ease. The close of the sense in couplets, and the frequent antitheses in the second line, are features so prominent that an artist of inferior skill, a mere *faber imus*, is able to copy them, and to preserve a very near resemblance.

His translation of Homer is a treasury of splendid language; and he who has studied it will not find himself at a loss for shining epithets adapted to every occasion. I detract not from his merit; for as the improver of English versification, as the introducer of a brilliant diction unknown before, he has justly obtained universal fame.

But that which is laudable in him as the inventor, cannot entitle his mere imitators to any great applause. They may be called good versifiers and pretty poetasters, but they cannot rank with their master as a poet, or an original improver of versification.

While they exercised their imitative skill on subjects not at all injurious, they might obtain approbation for their excellence, and would certainly escape censure; but the candid, the moderate, and impartial part of mankind have lamented that they have stolen the graces of Pope's versification, to decorate and recommend a kind of satire, abounding in virulent and personal invective, of which the Dunciad afforded but too striking an example.

Some works of this kind have been extolled in the highest terms; but the extravagant applause was, in great measure, the ebullition of that unhappy propensity of the human mind which prompts it to rejoice in seeing elevated merit degraded by defamation. Divest such poems of their PERSONALITY, their *local and temporary allusions*, and how small a portion will remain of real genius to recommend them! they would not be read, notwithstanding their glare of epithet, and their sonorous num-

bers. The wit is not substantial enough to support itself without personal *invective*.

It is usual with these works to rise to universal fame immediately on publication; to bask, like the ephemera, in the sunshine for a day, and then to fall into irretrievable obscurity. Sudden popularity is like a land flood, which rages for a short time, and then returns into its narrow channel lost in its original insignificance.

One of the principal arts of their writers is to secure attention by seizing the topic of the hour, by filling their poems with the names of persons who are the subject of conversation at the moment, and by boldly surprizing their readers with attacks on characters the most respectable, or at least on persons who, from their important offices, provided they are tolorable decent, ought to be externally respected or exempted from virulent abuse and public obloquy. It is the interest of the community that persons in high stations, whose example is powerful, and whose authority ought to carry weight among all the lower ranks, should not be held out to the vulgar as objects of derision unless they are flagrantly enormous. If they have common failings, or have been guilty of errors merely human, a veil should be thrown over them, for the sake of decorum, and of that beautiful order in society, which conduces to a thousand beneficial purposes.

But a spirit of levelling high characters and rank is one of the distinguishing marks of the present times. Unfortunately for all that is decent, and honorable, and right, it has been found expedient that goverment, or the ministers of government, should be constantly embarrassed, whether right or wrong, by a public censure. The tools employed by the leaders of indiscriminate and irrational attacks are often such as are only fit for dirty work. Unable to effect any more laudable purpose, they have sometimes been incited to asperse ALL the temporary possessors of office, and its consequent power, and emoluments, though confessedly meritorious. Not satisfied with attacking the political persons, they have dared to go farther; to enter into the privacies of family retirement for the sake of degrading honest men, and to spare neither age nor sex in divulging whatever envy and malice may have suggested. The poetical satirist has been called upon as a powerful auxiliary in conducting the levelling en-

gine. Some read and are pleased with verse, who would have overlooked the invective of humble prose. Good versifiers have been found ready to engage in this service, and the most exalted persons in the kingdom have been cruelly hitched in a rhyme, and thrown out to the vulgar to be tossed about by the tongue of infamy.

Every loyal subject, every gentleman, every considerate father of a family, every man of common humanity, is hurt at the cruel and opprobrious treatment which the King, justly deemed the very fountain of honor, has experienced from the hands of rhyming satirists. Exclusively of all *personal* considerations, while this constitution is monarchical, the King should be honored for the sake of his office, and for the sake of the constitution.

Great pretensions to good humor, mirth, and gaiety, are made by personal satirists; but the pretensions are a veil of gauze. It is easy to see, through the pellucid disguise, the snakes of envy, the horrid features of malice, the yellow tinge of jealousy, and the distortions of disappointment grinning with a Sardonic smile.*

But as a veil is used, as diversion and pleasantry are promised, and as detraction from illustrious merit is but too agreeable to most men, personal and satirical poems are read, and, like wasps, do much mischief in the short period of their existence.

The pain they give to individuals who are thus burned with a caustic, yet are conscious of having given no provocation, is enough to render the practice odious in the eyes of all who consider duly how much a feeling mind suffers on such occasions, and how little right a dark assassin can have to inflict a punishment without an offence; and to bring a public accusation without coming forward to the public as the accuser.

The practice is injurious to society, as it tends to discourage the growth of virtue and all honest attempts to be distinguished by merit. Such attempts of necessity render a man conspicuous; and he no sooner becomes so, than he is considered as a proper mark for scorn to shoot

* Hic nigræ succus Caliginus, hæc est
Ærugo mera.....*Hor.*

What the scripture call the *Gall of Bitterness*, seems to give Horace's Idea completely.

at, and for envy to asperse. A man may be afraid to exert himself, when, every step he advances, he is the more in danger of attracting notice, and, consequently, of becoming the mark at which the malevolent may *bend their bows, and shoot out their arrows, even bitter words.*

What a triumph to villainy, profligacy, and ignorance, when virtuous, innocent, and inoffensive characters are thus singled out for that satire which themselves only can deserve.

This is a grievance which requires the interference of the legislature.* Expostulation is in vain; and even laws, which might redress it, will not be duly executed, in a country where some degree of licentiousness is unfortunately considered as essential to the existence of civil liberty.

EVENING VII.

ON MODERN SONGS SUNG AT PLACES OF PUBLIC DIVERSION.

EVERY scholar knows that Bishop Lowth, in a solemn introduction to his Lectures on sacred Poetry, has inserted, in the very first place, and as one of the most striking instances of the power of poetry, a Greek political ballad, which used to be sung by the Athenian liberty-boys at their festive *symposia,* and by the mob and the ballad-singers in the streets and alleys of that celebrated city. The Bishop, after citing it at full length, suggests, that if, after the memorable ides of March, such a song had been given by the *Tyrannicides* of Rome to the common people to be sung in the Suburra and the Forum, it would have been all over with the party and the tyranny of the Cæsars. This ballad *(Harmodion Melos)* would, in the opinion of the Prelate, have done more than all the Philippics of Cicero; and yet, though in Greek, it is not better than many an one sung in Cheapside in praise of Wilkes and liberty. It bears a considerable resemblance to several popular songs written by such Poets as, Tom D'Urfey and George Alexander Stevens, whom

* Vim dignam lege regi.....*Hor.*
A wrong which law should curb.

some future lecturer in poetry may call (as the Bishop does Callistratus, the author of his favorite song) ingenious poets and excellent members of the state.*

That the Bishop thought proper to select a trivial ballad to shew the force of poetry, when he was to treat of heaven-inspired poetry, evinces that he deemed ballads capable of producing wonderful effects on the human heart, and therefore of great consequence, and worthy to be ranked with the sublimest strains and even with sacred poetry.

I imagine there must have been a favorite tune to these words, which is now lost past recovery; for among us a popular tune and popular words are generally united; at least the words will seldom be long popular without a favorite tune. Words scarcely above nonsense have had a fine effect when recommended by favorite sounds; *Lillabullero* is an obvious instance, and many others might be enumerated. Lord Wharton boasted that he rhymed the King out of the kingdom by it. *Hearts of Oak are our Ships, Hearts of Oak are our Men,* is as good a composition as that of the old Grecian with the hard name, and I dare say has contributed to animate many a poor creature, whose unhappy lot it was to be *food for powder.*—— *Hosier's Ghost, the Vicar of Bray,* and *joy to great Cæsar,* had great weight in the times in which they first appeared.

But if political songs produce consequences so important, it is but reasonable to conclude, that bacchanalian and amorous songs have, in their way, an influence similar and no less powerful.

Music and poetry are wonderfully efficacious on the mind when they act separately; but, when united, their power is more than doubled. They are, of necessity, united in songs, and the effect is usually increased by wine, cheerful conversation, and every species of convivial joy.

I argue, then, that, if political songs have had such wonderful power as to lead on armies to conquest, and to dethrone kings; those songs in which the joys of love and wine are celebrated, must have done great execution in private life. It is fair, I think, to draw such an inference.

* Ingeniosos poetas et valde bonos cives.

Lowth de Sacra Poesi.

I proceed to infer, that it is of great consequence to the cause of temperance, and all other virtues, that the poetry of popular songs should be of a good tendency. For as songs may do great harm, so may they do great good, under proper regulation.

Perhaps we have not improved in song-writing so much as in other species of poetry; for the old songs are still the best, if we judge by that infallible criterion, Popularity.

But such is the love of novelty, that with a new tune there must be a new song; and, unhappily, the composers of the poetry are less excellent in their art, than the composers of the music. The music is often delightful, while the verse is merely rhyme, not only unaccompanied with reason, but destitute of fancy, harmony, and elegance.

But they who can write neither good sense nor good poetry, can write licentiously, and give to their insipid jingle the high seasoning of indelicate double meanings, or even gross obscenity.

If they descend not to this degradation, they yet represent the passion of love in language, which, though mere common-place, renders it very difficult for ladies of delicacy to sing their songs without the blush of confusion. Nothing is, indeed, more common than to hear young ladies say, "The tune is delightful, but the words are non-"sensical. We never mind the words, we only make use "of them to sing the tune, without giving them a mo-"ment's attention."

The effects of a song ought to arise conjunctly from the music and the poetry. If the words are considered as of no consequence and unworthy of attention, it is evident that much of the pleasure, perhaps half of it, is entirely lost to the singer and the hearer. But though the young lady may apologise for singing nonsense, or warm descriptions of passions which her delicacy must conceal, by saying she does not mind the words; it may be doubted whether it is possible to learn a song by memory, and sing it frequently in company, without giving the words a very considerable degree of attention. The ear often corrupts the heart by the intervention of the lyre.

And I think it probable that indelicate songs have done almost as much harm by inflaming the imagination, as no-

vels and sentimental letters. I do not speak of songs grossly indecent; for such are certainly never permitted to lie on the young lady's harpsichord; but I speak of those which come out every season at the celebrated places of public amusement. The music is charming, and the words are usually well adapted to the mixed company of those places, but not always so well to the parlor, the drawing-room, and ladies library.

I propose to the musical ladies, or rather to the music masters, that whenever a foolish or improper song is set to a pleasing and excellent tune, they would seek some poetical composition of similar metre, and of established reputation, which may be sung to the same tune, without any inconvenience, but on the contrary with great advantage, to the tune, to the morals, to the taste; and with an addition to the pleasure of all young persons who are educated with care and delicacy.

Where young ladies have a poetical talent, which is common in this age, I should think they could not employ it more agreeably and usefully, than in writing new words to tunes which are accompanied with such as they cannot but disapprove. It would be an additional pleasure to the hearers to have, at the same time, a specimen of the fair performer's skill both in music and in poetry.

I cannot dismiss the subject without expressing a wish that the composers of fashionable songs would take care, for their own sake, that the poetry should be at least inoffensive; for there are many most pleasing pieces of music rejected by respectable families, and consequently soon lost in obscurity, because the words are such as cannot be sung without causing some degree of pain or exciting a blush. This is not indeed a licentious age in theatrical amusements, nor in song-writing, compared with the reign of the second Charles: but still there is a disguised indecency which prevails in both, and which is probably the more injurious, as the poisoned pill is gilded, and as the dagger is braided with a wreath of myrtle.

But, exclusively of moral considerations, every man of taste must wish to see good poetry united with good music.

The best* poets of antiquity wrote the most popular

* Poetæ melici et lyrici.

songs. Most of the odes of Horace are love or drinking songs. Anacreon has gained immortality by songs alone. Sappho was a song writer. Even great statesmen, as, for instance, Solon, wrote songs for political purposes with great success.

Many of our best poets also who have obtained the rank of English classics, wrote songs; but who writes for Vauxhall? The best writers of the age need not think it a degrading condescension, when they consider the dignity of music and poetry, and how widely their effects are diffused into this musical age and country.

EVENING VIII.

Ornes ea vehementius quam fortasse sentis. Amori nostro plusculum etiam quin concedat veritas, largiare.

Add a little more embellishment than you perhaps think strictly due. Bestow a little more upon your friendship for me than rigid truth would allow..... *Cic. Epist. 1 Lucceius.*

Quicquid Græcia mendax
Audet in historia.....

Her bold untruths in History's page
Romancing Greece unfolds..... *Hor.*

IF you have been an ocular witness to an affray, a fire, or any occurrence in the street, and you see an account of it in all the newspapers next morning, though they should all pretend to accuracy and minuteness, you would find them all vary in some particulars from each other, and from the truth, yet without the least design to contradict or to deceive; but different reporters of the same facts saw them at different times, or in different lights, with various degrees of attention, and reported them with various degrees of fidelity, according to the variety in their powers of memory, or their talents for description.

In explaining the customs and describing places, which they have never seen, there is every reason to believe that most of the historians are unintentionally deceitful. It is seldom that neighboring nations can know with accuracy each other's most *familiar actions*, sports, diversions, and

places of resort, by written accounts or oral description. Nothing but ocular observation can secure exactness. I was lately much diverted with an article from the great French Encyclopedie, quoted in the notes to Mr. Mason's English Garden. The word to be explained is bowling-green, spelt by the lexicographers *Boulingrin*. "Boulingrin is a species of parterre," say they, "composed of pieces of divided turf, with borders sloping *(en glacis,)* and evergreens at the corners and other parts of it. It is mowed *four times* a-year to make the turf finer. The invention of this kind of parterre comes from England, as also its name, which is derived from *boule* round, and *grin*, fine grass or turf. *Boulingrins* are either simple or compound; the simple are all turf without ornament; the compound are cut into compartments of turf, embroidered with knots, mixt with little paths, borders of flowers, yew-trees, and flowering shrubs. Sand also of different colors contributes greatly to their value."

Such is the French description of a Bowling-green sanctioned by the great Encyclopedie.

The celebrated Mr. *Sorbiere*, furnishes the following materials for an ecclesiastical historian of England, in his famous book of travels among us. He says, "that our chief clergymen, who have pluralities of benefices, make their grooms their curates; that our bishops horribly abuse their jurisdiction in their ex-communications and impositions; that they are so haughty, that none of the inferior priests dare to speak to them; that they rob the church, by letting its leases for thirty years, getting all the money into their own pockets, and *leaving only a small revenue to their successors;* and that England is a country where no man is afraid of committing simony."

It would be difficult to obtain an exact history of the events of yesterday; how much more of those which happened a hundred or a thousand years ago, and in times when the art of manual writing was not common, and men were prone to transmit to posterity by tradition, the dreams of the night, and the imaginations of their idle hours, as real and authentic history.

Those who wrote in the earlier periods, finding a dearth of materials, from the deficiency of written documents, sought in the powers of invention what they could not find in the archives of their country. A book was to

made, and it was to be entertaining. The *terra incognita* was therefore supplied with woods and mountains according to the will of the geographer. Hence the stories of Pygmies and Cranes, Gynocephali, Astromori, Hippopodes, Phannisii, and Troglodytæ.

Heredotus one of the earliest historians, writes a romance under the name of history, almost as fictitious as Don Quixote de la Mancha, but not nearly so ingenious or entertaining; yet he is called the Father of History. He might as justly be called the Father of Lies. The Chaldæan history of Berosus, and the Ægyptian history of Manetho, are deemed but the forgeries of Annius and Viterbo. Sanchoniathon's Phœnician history is equally destitute of credit, if there is any confidence to be placed in the opinions of Scaliger and Dodwell.

Thus the very foundations, on which the splendid fabric of history is to be erected are destitute of solidity. But they are usually strong enough to support the superstructure; which is too often but a paper building, a house of cards, pretty and diverting to look at, but of little use and value, when the entertainment it affords is deducted.

It would be a just description of the greater part of histories, to say of them, that they are historical romances, founded sometimes on fact, but capriciously related according to the historian's prejudices, party, or misrepresentation, and fantastically embellished by the false colors of poetry and rhetoric.

Writers of history are often in a dependent state, and are ready to conceal, or palliate, or exaggerate any circumstance or transaction, according to the wishes of a party, a powerful nobleman, or a king. *The learned pate ducks to the wealthy fool,* and the pen of history is often guided by an illiterate despot.

The histories written by different persons of different parties are known to represent the very same things and persons as laudable and execrable, godlike and diabolical at the same time.

There is a well-known historical instance of partiality recorded by Polybius, who was himself also extremely partial. Fabius and Philinus wrote the history of the Punic war; Fabius a Roman, and Philinus a Carthaginian. The Roman extolled his countrymen, and blamed the Carthaginians in every thing. The Carthaginian threw all the

errors and defects on the Romans, and triumphed in the superiority of Punic valor, wisdom, and generosity. To whom was credit due? Certainly to neither; and have we no modern Fabii and Philini? Let us read the gazettes of different nations in a state of war.

When I am desirous of knowing real facts stript of fallacity, I look for them in some *chronological* table; but I read not a popular history. I peruse a popular history, only when I am desirous of being *entertained* by composition, by the charms of style, eloquence, and poetical painting; or of being amused with observing the influence of party, or religious prejudice, on the mind of the writer and his admirers. The real facts are the clay which the popular historian, like a modeller, forms into various shapes, according to his own taste and inclination, some to honor and some to dishonor. To some of it he gives great beauty not its own; some he throws away wantonly or artfully, and the rest he shapes into vulgar utensils; or models them into the deformity of caricature. It is a pleasing pastime to view his work; and men of taste and imagination are much delighted with his ingenuity. Weak and inexperienced persons believe him implicitly; others find real truth in him nearly in the same proportion as silver is found in a great mass of lead, or pearls in oyster-shells.

So little credit is to be given to historians, even in the recital of facts of public notoriety! how much less to their delineation of characters, and descriptions of motives for actions, secret counsels, and designs, to which none was a witness but the bosom which entertained them? Yet many historians kindly communicate all. You would think them of the privy council of all nations; that they possessed the attribute of omniscience, though their intelligence never came from a higher source than an old-woman's tale.

Your true, classical historian never feels any difficulties for want of matter. When he finds it not, he makes it. He is a poet in prose. I scarcely need mention those fine speeches in the very best ancient historians, not one syllable of which, except in a very few instances, was ever uttered by the personage to whom it is attributed. Truth gives a faint outline; the historian adds shades and colors, drapery, action, and expression. He lays on the

red, the orange, the yellow, the blue, the purple, the violet, the black and the white.*

Some writers in their attack of Christianity have relied greatly on the representations of historians whose characters were remarkably bad both as men and as writers; who also labored under the *general* imputation of misrepresenting truth, like every other historiographer. Whatever such writers find against the Christian cause in the most contemptible historians, they bring in triumph, and are ready to sing the song of victory, or cry out† *eureka* with Archimedes. But with all their pretensions to philosophy, they act most unphilosophically in giving implicit credit to wretched annalists, paltry tools of paltry princes, who are known to have fabricated a great part of their stories; and who, when they spoke against Christianity, saw it with the eyes of prejudiced heathens, or envious sophists, too proud to behold with patience a sect flourishing on the ruins of their own fame and dominion.

But it will be asked, whether what I have said against the credibility of history in general, may not be applied to the evangelical history. I answer that perhaps it might, if the credibility of that history did not chiefly depend on its internal evidence. I never yet saw any external evidence of it which might not admit of controversy; but the internal proofs have a counterpart in every man's bosom, who will faithfully search for it, which gives it incontestable confirmation. The Evangelists and Apostles were fallible men like other historians; but the Spirit of God, which operated on them, and now operates on all true Christians, teaches the humble inquirer to find truth there, and there only, in a state of perfect purity. We may amuse ourselves with tinsel and paste in mere human compositions; but gold and jewels are to be dug for in that mine; and happy they who know how to value them.

I will cite one strong internal evidence of the Gospel History from the preliminary observations of Macknight's Harmony.

* Græcis historiis plerumque poeticæ similis est licentia. *Quintilian.*

The licence assumed by the Greek historians, resembles the licence of poetry.

† I have made a discovery.

"It is remarkable, that through the whole of their histories, the Evangelists have not passed one encomium upon Jesus, or upon any of his friends, nor thrown out one reflection against his enemies; although much of both kinds might have been, and no doubt would have been done by them, had they been governed either by a spirit of imposture or enthusiasm. Christ's life is not praised in the gospel, his death is not lamented, his friends are not commended, his enemies are not reproached, nor even blamed; but every thing is told naked and unadorned, just as it happened; and all who read are left to judge, and make reflections for themselves; a manner of writing which the historians never would have fallen into, had not their minds been under the guidance of the most sober reason, and deeply impressed with the dignity, importance, and truth of their subject."

There is then no history in the world so artless as the evangelical, and none which, from its manner, has so great an appearance of veracity.

But though this is not admitted for a moment by the sceptical writer; yet, at the same time, every passage against Christianity in ancient historians, however suspicious their character, is triumphantly cited by him as a full, a strong, and unanswerable evidence in favor of infidelity.

EVENING IX.

Cui non sit publica vena,
Qui nihil expositum soleat deducere, nec qui
Communi feriat carmen triviale moneta. *Juv.*

Stale hackney'd jokes shall be no longer borne
Like worthless half-pence by the vulgar worn.

THE common coin which is constantly in circulation among the lowest of the people, usually contracts a degree of filth, which renders it contemptible to the genteeler and richer orders, many of whom never touch it with their hands, or suffer it to enter their pockets, from a fear of defilement.

There is also a common sort of wit, which, from constant use in the mouths of the vulgar, is become pollut-

ed. It is indeed, in its trite state, fit for none but the vulgar, and ought, like dirty halfpence and farthings, to be chiefly confined to their intercourse.

The wit I mean, I distinguish by the name of Common-place Wit. It might have been sheer wit in the days of our grandfathers; but is now, from an alteration in manners and customs, either no longer founded on truth and real life or has quite lost the grace of novelty.* It is as obsolete as fardingales, ruffs, and square-toed shoes. It is worn out, quite threadbare, and ought to be consigned to Monmouth-street, and Rosemary-lane.

One of the most common topics of common-place wit, is a jocularity on the lord-mayor and aldermen of London, as great eaters, particularly of custard. It might be true formerly that they were addicted to gluttony, and it may be true now that some among them, like other men, have set up an idol in their belly. But gluttony is not now sufficiently confined to them to justify the perpetual and exclusive jokes on their gormandizing, as if it were their peculiar and inseparable characteristic. Gentlemen of education and patrimonial fortune have often been elected into the court of aldermen; and there is no more reason to suppose them fonder of eating when become magistrates, than when they continued in a private station. In general there is a refinement in the present age which does not allow men of rank and fortune to place their enjoyment in feeding to excess, though it may teach them to indulge the more agreeable luxury of eating with an elegance of palate.

I have known aldermen of singular abstemiousness, who would sit at tables covered with every dainty, and eat moderately of the plainest food; while hungry *would-be-wits*, who were accidentally invited, indulged in excessive gluttony. Yet the *would-be-wits* used to laugh with a grin of self-complacency at their entertainers, (as soon as they were recovered of their own cropsickness) for giving what they were pleased to call an *aldermanic* feast.

The common council and the city companies are stand-

* Respire exemplar vitæ morumque jubebo
Doctum imitatorem.....*Hor.*

Let imitators truly learn'd and wise
Inspect the living manners as they rise.

ing topics of jocularity, on account of their atchievments with the knife and fork. As it unavoidably happens that some among them are of low and vulgar habits, and of mean minds, as well as of mean origin, a few may be observed to compensate the poorness of their own tables, by gormandizing at a public feast, where dainties are presented which they never tasted before, or where the flavor of every dish is heightened by that fine seasoner to their palates, a consciousness that it comes free of cost. This, I say, may be the case in a few instances; but they are not striking enough to justify an everlasting repetition of jokes on the worthy liverymen and common council of the city of London.

Even if the jokes are well founded, we have now had enough of them, and let not us be overfed in one way, while we are ridiculing excess of food in another.

But not only the lord-mayor, aldermen, common-council, and livery, but all the natives, and all the inhabitants of London, supply the witlings with a perennial fountain of jocularity, under the appellation of Cockneys. Your true Cockney, one who was never out of the sound of Bow bell, is uncommon in the present age. No persons ramble more than the citizens, to Bath, Tunbridge, Brighthelmstone, Margate, and all other places of fashionable resort. Perhaps it would be better if there were more real Cockneys. Trade would be better minded, there would be less folly, extravagance, and ruin, and the Gazette would not be so crowded with advertisements. But the Cockney was selected as an object of ridicule some hundred years ago; and so he must continue, or else the haberdashers of small wit, and retailers of old jokes, must become bankrupts for want of stock in trade.

The professions, indeed, will supply them with many articles in their way, ready cut and dried.

The clergyman, in the ideas of those humorists, is no less fond of good eating and drinking than the alderman; and why should he be? since both of them are only on a level with the rest of mankind in this species of enjoyment, which is natural and necessary, and which with respect to guilt or innocence, may be deemed a matter of indifference. I imagine that the idea of clergymen's eating to excess might arise from the ancient custom of keeping chaplains at the table of great men, where they fared

sumptuously every day, and, perhaps, seemed highly delighted, though even then it was expected of them, that they should retire, as soon as the dessert appeared.

But if the joke on the parsons was once a good one, it has now lost all its goodness, because it is stale. The parsons, after all, may console themselves, if the jokers can say no worse of them than that they love pudding. A piece of solid pudding, it must be owned, is in itself a far better thing than such witticism, such salt as has lost its savor.

Those jokes on the clerical profession which relate to formal dress, great wigs, grave faces, and long sermons, are now totally unsupported by the manners and fashions which prevail at present in the ecclesiastical *world*. The race of formal *Spintexts* and solemn *Saygraces* is nearly extinct.

The lawyers afford an abundance of ready-made jokes for little wits; but the jokes are so old that they cease to please, except among the witty fraternity, or among the vulgar.

The profession of physic is, perhaps, the richest mine of wit, which the witlings are able to find. Tye-wig and gold-headed canes are inexhaustibe; but the physicians of the present day wear neither. There is the misfortune. The barren joker procures all his stock from the old stores of deceased witlings of the last century; mere rubbish and lumber, which would be thrown away, if it were not bought up and retailed by those second-hand dealers in cast-off trumpery.

The sects, as well as the professions, suggest a great deal of common-place jocularity. Presbyterians and Quakers supply a delectable sort of wit, which comes at an easy rate, being attended with no expence of thought nor labor of invention. But the Presbyterian and Quaker of the last century resembled those of the present but little; and the shaft of ridicule, which might have adhered to some of them, would now, in most cases, recoil on the assailant.

National prejudices are another copious fountain of petty wit. A Welshman is no sooner mentioned in the society of jokers, than goats, leeks, and red herrings occur to his polite imagination. A Scotchman brings to mind the Scotch fiddle, famine, oat-meal, whiskey, barren land,

and want of trees; an Irishman, potatoes, blunders, bulls: a Frenchman, soup meagre, wooden shoes, ruffles without shirts, cowardice: an Englishman, roast beef, honor, honesty, courage, riches, every thing glorious and desirable under the sun.

Many of these vulgar characteristics might originally have some foundation in truth; but when the same dish is served up with the same sauce from age to age, who can wonder if the appetite for it should fail?

And now I mention dishes, what a feast of ready-dressed wit does a dinner supply? Suppose it a calf's head; then, pray do you want brains? You have tongue enough already. A hare suggests the witty idea of being hare-brained; a goose is as full of jokes as of sage and onion. The land of *Ham* abounds with salt, and I wish there were a grain of the true Attic in it. If you want sauce, you are informed that you are saucy enough already.*

In harmless converse, many levities and follies which arise from an ebullition of good spirits, and are accompanied with good humor, are not only pardonable, but useful, as they contribute to pass a vacant hour with a charming gaiety of heart. But in composition, all common-place wit is insufferable; and yet he who is acquainted with the dramatic writings of the age will recollect, that many comedies, and more farces, depend upon nothing else for their power of affording entertainment. The drollery of comic actors causes them to keep their place on the stage; otherwise it would be impossible to sit at them without yawning or hissing. It would not be difficult to mention both poems and prosaic pieces of a sort of humor, founded entirely on ridicule of the citizen, the clergyman, the lawyer, the doctor, the Presbyterian, the Quaker, the Welshman, the Scotchman, the Irishman, the Frenchman, and not displaying one idea which is not to be numbered in the list of common places. The humor, in its day, was perhaps good; but it is time to relinquish it when it is grown threadbare; and I advise all *would-be-wits,* who have no other stock in hand but such as I have described, to get rid of their lumber immediately, and set up with as good a capital as they can raise, of common sense; recollecting the proverb, that an ounce of good sense is worth a pound of

* Vide Swift's Polite Conversation.

wit. I will add, that common sense will not only be a more useful, but a more agreeable qualification; for to people of judgment, nothing is more disgusting than the importunate and impertinent vivacity of a petulent retailer of stale, threadbare, old-fashioned wit and humor.

EVENING X.

GORGON, ICON, ET AMAZON!

Propria quæ Maribus.

THE Spectator interfered very much in the *(mundus muliebris)* woman's world. I do no know whether he did not condescend too far, in meddling with the affairs of the toilette, considering that he was capable of enlarging on subjects of a kind so much sublimer and more important. But trifling as dress is, he recollected what Horace says concerning the tendency of trifles to lead to serious evils, and gave it a very considerable share of his attention.

The ladies in his day were not so great readers as in the present; and I always consider his making them and their dress so frequently the subject of his lucubrations, an innocent stratagem to draw their attention to his book, and thus to allure them to the noblest speculations on subjects moral and divine.

But if he really thought the dress of the ladies of great importance, and had lived in the present age, a great part of his papers must have been devoted to the subject.

I think it is easy to collect, from what he has written, that he would have highly disapproved the masculine dress for which the ladies in our times have displayed a singular predilection.

There is something so lovely in feminine softness and delicacy, when free from affectation, and not caused by sickness or infirmity, that they who endeavor to hide those attractive qualities, by assuming the air and dress of a man, must be considered as ignorantly defeating their own intentions to please. Taste requires a congruity between the internal character and external appearance. The imagination will involuntarily form to itself an idea of such a cor-

respondence; and the lady who appears in a manly dress will at first sight suggest the apprehension of a deficiency of female gentleness and grace. This first idea may be superseded by any one who takes time to consider, that the dress is not, perhaps, the consequence of choice, but merely an innocent compliance with a temporary fashion. Yet as first ideas are in general of great consequence, and not always corrected by second, I should think it wise in the female world to take care that their dress, which they evidently study with an intention to render themselves agreeable, should not convey a forbidding idea to the most superficial observer.

Silks, linens, cottons, gauzes, and all the stock of the milliner and haberdasher, which I forbear to name, lest I should only display my ignorance, have a beauty, a delicacy, and a softness, characteristic of those whom they were designed to embellish. But broad cloth displays a strength and roughness, which is of a piece with the manly character. Notwithstanding this evident truth, nothing is more common in the present age, than to behold ladies of the utmost elegance dressed in broad cloth externally from top to toe. I do not censure the riding-dress, which pleads convenience in palliation of its maseuline appearance: but the riding-dress is lately become both the walking-dress and the domestic dress. The *habit* has introduced the great coat, the sourtout, in which a lady, buttoned up with broad metal buttons, appears much like the footman behind her carriage; and, indeed, when she drives her husband or her lover in his phæton, she might very easily be mistaken at a distance for his coachman.

"But it is a charming, warm, and comfortable dress, and if the lady and her husband or lover like it, pray what right has any body to object to it?"

I believe it may admit of a doubt whether the men, in general, are pleased with it, any otherwise than as it is the fashion; and as they wish their ladies to be in the fashion, like their coats and carriages, their houses and their chattels. There may indeed be a sort of men who have given up their own manly character, and who yet think there should be a certain quantity of it somewhere in the family, and so are not displeased to see it in their partners; but the generality of men, whatever they may assert in polite submission to their ladies, are naturally attached to them for

female graces, and must disapprove in their hearts the least assumption of the masculine character.

However, let the broad cloth be confined to the use of travelling or going out of doors; I will only contend that it should not be worn at the fire-side. God and nature have made the sexes distinct for wise purposes, and let not the taylor confound their appearance. Convenience and warmth may plead for the masculine dress on the journey, but that plea loses its force in the domestic circle.

Is there not reason to apprehend that the habitual dress has an influence on the manners? Is it not likely that she who constantly assumes a manly appearance, and a roughness of garb, should likewise display something similar in her behavior? And may not her behavior gradually injure her disposition; so that in time she will not only appear less amiable, but may be so? I express myself interrogatively and dubiously, leaving the answers to be made by those who, when they seriously consider, are the best able to decide on points like these.

After all, I am far from certain that dress is of so much consequence as the Spectator seems to consider it. It is indubitable that there are excellent and most amiable women, who follow the fashion in dress wherever she leads, without any apparent evil. Good sense, perhaps, may prevent consequences which would otherwise arise; but a mere aping folly in lower ranks and with lower understandings may suffer from things which in themselves appear innocent or indifferent.

Much of the severity on singular dress or new fashions, to which our eyes have never been accustomed, arises from narrowness of thinking, and from prejudice. So long as dress answers the purpose of a decent covering, and a warm clothing, the ornament of it may be safely left, I think, to the discretion of the female wearer.

Persons in high life, urged by the impulse of that pride which is as strong in low life as in high, will be continually endeavoring to distinguish themselves by external appearance. Those on the next step, quite down to the bottom of the ladder, will always be assuming the appearance of those above them. Fancy and invention are put to the rack to find out new marks unattainable, if possible, by the subordinate classes; and nothing keeps them so long distinguished as something very *outrè*, and apparently ugly and ab-

surd. This accounts for very strange deviations from beautiful simplicity.

The deviations, however, encourage trade, and amuse those who have little to do. Let not the satirist therefore vent his spleen on the ladies' dress, provided they do not confound the different distinctions of sex by assuming the dress of men. I would forbid, by censorial authority, if I had it, all beaver hats and broad cloth, except to such venerable matrons as time has honored with a beard.

How much is continually said on the subject of head-dresses! It is unfair in *men*, except friseurs, to interfere in that province. The most elegant women, in the most classical times, adorned their heads with ornaments, which raised them so high as to leave it matter of doubt whether the head was a part of the body, or the body a part of the head. The dressing of the hair is called by a Roman poet, the *Building of a head*; and the English ladies have scarcely yet equalled the Roman edifices, tho' the painters of caricature have been outrageously severe upon them.

Moralists may certainly find better employment than that of censuring modes of ornament, which are the natural effects of *female instinct*; if the old Grecian's definition of a woman, of which the Spectator is so fond, be a just one, that she is an animal delighting in finery.

EVENING XI.

ON THE CHARACTER OF DOCTOR JOHNSON AND THE ABUSE OF BIOGRAPHY.

THE illustrious character of Pierre de Corneille, the popular dramatic poet of France, induced those who approached him to expect something in his manners, address, and conversation above the common level. They were disappointed; and, in a thousand similar instances, a similar disappointment has taken place.

The friends of Corneille, as was natural enough, were uneasy at finding people express their disappointment after an interview with him. They wished him to appear as *respectable* when near as when at a distance; in a personal

intimacy, as in the regions of fame. They took the liberty of mentioning to him his defects, his awkward address, his ungentleman-like behavior. Corneille heard the enumeration of his faults with great patience; and, when it was concluded, said, with a smile, and with a just confidence in himself: "All this may be very true; but, notwithstanding all this, I am still PIERRE DE CORNEILLE."

The numberless defects, infirmities, faults, and disagreeable qualities, which the friends of Dr. Johnson have brought to public light, were chiefly what, in less conspicuous men, would be passed over as foibles, or excused as mere peccadillos; and however his enemies may triumph in the exposure, I think he might, if he were alive, imitate Corneille and say: "Notwithstanding all this, I am still SAMUEL JOHNSON."

Few men could stand so fiery a trial as he has done. His gold has been put into the furnace, and, considering the violence of the fire, and the frequent repetition of the process, the quantity of dross and alloy is inconsiderable. Let him be considered not absolutely but comparatively: and let those who are disgusted with him, ask themselves, whether their own characters, or those they most admire, would not exhibit some deformity, if they were to be analysed with a minute and anxious curiosity.

The private conversation of Johnson, the caprice of momentary ill-humor, the weakness of disease, the common infirmities of human nature, have been presented to the public, without those alleviating circumstances which probably attended them. And where is the man that has not foibles, weaknesses, follies, and defects of some kind? And where is the man that has greater virtues, greater abilities, more useful labors, to put into the opposite scale against his defects than Dr. Johnson?

Biography is every day descending from its dignity. Instead of an instructive recital, it is becoming an instrument to the mere gratification of an impertinent, not to say a malignant, curiosity. There are certain foibles and weaknesses, which should be shut up in the coffin with the poor reliques of fallen humanity. Wherever the greater part of a character is *shining*, the *few blemishes* should be covered with the pall.

I am apprehensive that the custom of exposing the nakedness of eminent men to every eye, will have an un-

favorable influence on virtue, it may teach men to fear celebrity; and, by extinguishing the desire of fame and posthumous glory, destroy one powerful motive to excellence.

I think there is reason to fear lest the moral writings of Johnson should lose something of their effect by this unfortunate degradation. To prevent so mischievous a consequence of his friends communications, I wish his readers to consider the old saying, *that no man is wise at all times;* and to reflect that reason and argument do not lose any thing of their value from the errors and foibles of a writer's conduct. Let them also remember the old complaint, that many see and approve the better part, while from the violence of passion they pursue the worse.

Is it to be believed that the greatest men in all history, would have appeared almost uniformly great, if the taste of their age, and the communicative disposition of their intimate friends had published their private conversation, the secrets of their closets and of their chambers.

It was usual to write the lives of great men *con amore*, with affection for them, and there ran a vein of panegyric with the narrative. Writer and reader agreed in loving the character, and the reader's love was increased and confirmed by the writer's representation. An ardor of imitation was thus excited, and the hero of the story placed, without one dissenting voice, in some honorable nich in the temple of Fame. But this biographical anatomy, in minutely dissecting parts, destroys the beauty of the whole; just as in cutting up the most comely body, many loathsome objects are presented to the eye, and the beautiful form is utterly disfigured.

It is said indeed that not only truth, but the whole truth, should be published and left naked for the contemplation of mankind; for as the anatomy of the body contributes to the benefit of human nature, by promoting medical and chirurgical knowledge; so the dissection of characters tends to the developement of error, which, by being thus exposed, may be avoided.

From such an exposure some advantage may be derived to the philosopher; but I fear little to the multitude. I am rather induced to believe, that the abasement of great characters, and the exposure of defect, prevents the salutary operation of their good example, and of their

writings. The common reader seldom makes refined and philosophical observation. But he says, if such men, so learned, so great, so celebrated, were guilty of this failing, or remarkable for that misconduct, how can I attempt, with hope of success, to avoid it? He gives up the contest, and shelters his surrender under the name and authority of the defunct philosopher, whom he once admired, and while he admired, endeavored to imitate.

I think it was Ægypt in which a tribunal was established to sit in judgment on the departed. Johnson has been tried with as accurate an investigation of circumstances as if he had been judicially arraigned on the banks of the Nile.

It does not appear that the witnesses were partial. The sentence of the public, according to their testimony, has rather lowered him; but time will replace him where he was, and where he ought to be, notwithstanding all his errors and infirmities, high in the ranks of Fame. Posterity will forgive his roughness of manner, his apparent superstition, his mistakes in making his will, his prejudices against Whigs and the Scotch, and will remember his Dictionary, his moral writings, his biography, his manly vigor of thought, his piety, and his charity. They will make allowances for morbid melancholy; for a life, a great part of which was spent in extreme indigence and labor, and the rest, by a sudden transition, in the midst of affluence, flattery, obsequiousness, submission, and universal renown.

The number of writers who have discussed the life, character, and writings of Johnson, is alone sufficient to evince that the public feels him to be a *great man*, and it will not be easy to write him down through mistaken friendship or declared enmity. He was indeed a great man; but mortal man, however well he may deserve the epithet, Great, comparatively, is absolutely, but a little being; and the example of Johnson is an additional proof of this obvious, but humiliating conclusion. I wish nevertheless, that his life had been written in the manner of the French *Eloges*, and with the affection and reverence due to supereminent merit.

Many of his apparent friends, one may suppose, were of those who forced themselves into his company and acquaintance in order to gain credit, and gratify their own

vanity. They seem to have had little cordiality for him, and no objection to lower his fame, if they could raise their own names to eminence on the ruins. Many of them had, perhaps, been hurt by his freedom of rebuke, and were glad to gratify revenge when retaliation was out of his power. If he were alive, he would crush the swarms of insects that have attacked his character, and with one sarcastic blow, flap them into non-existence.

EVENING XII.

ON THE REAL AND PRETENDED MOTIVES OF WRITERS.

REAL diamonds and gold are rare, concealed under the earth, or in the beds of rivers; but perhaps truth, as it is more valuable than diamonds and gold, is also more difficult to be found in a state of perfect and unsullied purity. A man scarcely knows the truth of his own mind, his own avowed and professed sentiments; so just is the remark of the Scriptures, THAT THE HEART IS DECEITFUL ABOVE ALL THINGS, WHO CAN KNOW IT?

Writers, frail and imperfect like their fellow-mortals, are very apt to deceive themselves and their readers, in representing the motives which impel them both to compose and to publish their lucubrations.

If you think it worth while to inspect Prefaces and Dedications, you will find many authors declaring, that their chief motive to write is a desire to inform the understandings, or to correct the morals of the world, regardless of themselves, whether fame or obscurity is to be their final portion. They are contented to withdraw themselves so long as the public receive advantage. While the cause of truth is served, or science advanced, their end is fully answered.

If indeed *man* were a more perfect being than he is found to be in his most informed and improved state, we might believe that writers, who recommended liberality and public spirit with much strength of argument, were themselves possessed of those qualities in a degree which *taught* them to forget their own interest, as they some-

times profess, in their zeal to promote the welfare of the public; but few men are so elevated as to be divested of self-love. One writer may renounce money; but is impelled by fame: another may despise fame; but is actuated by the love of lucre. If a few have written merely to inform and amend their fellow-creatures, they must have been such as were remarkably elevated and enlightened by the pure principles of Christianity. Heathen philosophy and human learning produce not such moral heroism.

But what shall we say of those public-spirited writers who compose and publish with the liberal view of delivering us all from superstition, or of *disabusing* us of Christianity? They pretend to an uncommon share of benevolence, they are outrageously philanthropic, and if their prefaces are to be believed, they mean only to liberate their fellow-creatures from the manacles of prejudice. But from the style of dictation which they assume, and the displeasure they express on being convicted of error and fallacy, there is reason to believe, that they are under the influence of pride and selfishness; of that peculiar selfishness which leads them, for the sake of gratifying their vanity, and of obtaining distinction among those of whom they affect a contempt, to hazard the disturbance of the repose, and even the destruction of the human race.

There are doubtless many men who discharge the duties of life, in the civil and domestic circles, from a virtuous principle; and very often sacrifice both their ease and their pecuniary interest to the performance of them; but what man shall say, that it is his indispensible duty to write, and to print his writings, for the improvement of the public? Who gave him this commission? A man may have an inclination to write his thoughts, and he may also be impelled by the fine feelings of his genius; but will any man who *publishes*, declare that, in doing so, he has no other motive or stimulus whatever but the love of mankind? If he is a good man, he must wish that his productions may do good; and the hope that they will do good may have weight in prevailing on him to offer them to the public notice; But, I believe, there is commonly a mixture of vanity even in this laudable motive; and that if he examines his heart, he will find in it a desire of dis-

tinction as a man of letters, and a love of literary fame. He wishes to raise himself while he serves others, and to buy distinction at the price of trouble.*

And allowing this to be so, where is the shame or culpability? Since there is no evil in being impelled to good and useful actions partly by the love of fame, why should authors studiously disavow that motive, and hypocritically declare, that they are benefiting their fellow-creatures? Such pretensions are the mere cant of authorship; a flimsy covering, intended to conceal that which is no disgrace, since it is found to be the attendant of the most aproved state of human nature.

I know of few better men, human errors excepted, or better writers than Cicero. But Cicero felt, and avowed, a love of fame; and has left it on record, as his opinion, that the best and noblest natures are the most powerfully actuated by the prospect of glory.

He who is sincerely influenced in publishing his sentiments by the love of God and man, without any commixture of pride and vanity, is, I must acknowledge, a much greater man than Cicero; and if any thing can give him this elevation, I repeat, that it must be THE RELIGION OF JESUS CHRIST. A man who is deeply impressed with a sense of his duty *as a Christian*, may be led to believe, and may, in consequence of his belief, shew, by his actions, that all his *talents* are to be used in the immediate service of him who gave them, in returning him praise, and in diffusing happiness among his creatures to the best of his abilities. But our gold has always a great mixture of alloy; and he who ostentatiously pretends, that the ore in his composition is perfectly pure, is in danger of being considered as an impostor. The very pretension of so much purity is itself a particle of dross, and a proof of a base mixture.

Let not the author, on one hand, assume the appearance of unattainable excellence; and let not the reader, on the other, expect or demand it. In the present infirmity of human nature, it is sufficient that good is intended and produced; though the motive is not entirely free rom vanity or self-interest.

* Digito monstrari & dicier hic est. *Hor.*

To hear it said there, there he goes.

I think it would be prudent, if authors would cease to declare, that their publications are entirely the effect of a regard for mankind, without any wish for distinction or emolument. Such a profession, as it is not rendered probable by uniform experience of human nature in its most perfect state, conduces to diminish the credit of an author, instead of advancing it, and therefore causes his book to have less influence on those whom it was intended to benefit. It savors of empiricism. The discerning part of mankind always expect and make allowances for some degree of self-love in every act of social beneficence.

Many, however, are inclined to expect from authors, that perfection which they see recommended in their books, and are disgusted and disappointed at beholding in them the common frailties and infirmities of human nature.* But if you expect the moralist to be uniformly as good as the morals he describes or recommends in his writings, then expect your physician to be always in health, or at least always able to cure his own disorders.

* Quotusquisque philosophorum invenitur qui disciplinam non *ostentationem suæ scientiæ*, sed *legem vitæ* putet?.....*Cic.*

How few philosophers are there who do not rather make a parade of their learned systems, than suffer them to be the guides of their conduct?

EVENING XIII.

ON THE ABSURD AFFECTATION OF MISERY.

THE vanity of man may justly be termed a Proteus. In the endeavor to obtain distinction, not only happiness, but even misery is sometimes affected and even incurred.

I believe it is considered by many as honorable to posses a degree of that sensibility which is too delicate to bear the common asperities of human life; and there is a stile of complaint which is thought pretty, and a sort of woe which has been indulged not only as a luxury but as an occasion of pride. If I might borrow a term from criticism for the use of ethics, I would denominate the querulous affectation of misery, the elegiac style of life. The plaintive tone of elegiac language, and the soft tinge of

melancholy, without any real cause, are very similar to the conversation and sentiments of those numerous complainers who have adopted the querulous style, because they considered it as extremely graceful.

I reverence the sorrows of the truly unhappy. Their tears are sacred. But those whoa ffect a sensibility which they do not possess, and act a woe which they never felt, are to be considered as ridiculous and reprehensible, because they make a mock of human misery, and sport with that compassion which ought never to be abused, and which was designed for the comfort of unfeigned affliction.

I respect the character of Mr. Gray, as that of a man of remarkable virtue, learning, and genius united. But he was melancholy without apparent reason: and, I apprehend, not entirely free from the wish to be considered as a man endowed with feelings unknown to the rest of his race. Every man of genius certainly has acute feelings; but those feelings will lead them to high enjoyments, and will make life more pleasurable than painful, if he will but submit to the guidance of his reason, and keep himself free from the affectation of singular misery. Pride and an insatiable desire of praise, will indeed often cause, in the votaries of fame, pangs unknown to others, which cannot be reasonably indulged.

Many poets, professedly elegiac, have pretended to uncommon wretchedness; but they deceived no sensible reader, since it was evident that their misery was no less fictitious than their mythology.

The affectation of woe is chiefly among the softer sex, in whom it is sometimes supposed to have been amiable. Pity it has been said, is nearly related to love. But the pity must be sincere. Affected woe will only excite affected pity, which is closely allied to a passion very different from love. Beauty in tears, while those tears are believed to be natural, must powerfully call for the protection of every man not destitute of generosity; but if the call is found to have been frequently made without sufficient reason, though it may cause the attention of false and selfish gallantry, it will not raise the sympathetic esteem of the estimable. She who wishes for such esteem, will be prudent in divesting herself of every kind of affectation.

I am sorry to see a taste prevail for novels which exhi-

bit unnatural pictures of misery, and diffuse a love of the woeful. The novel entitled *Werter*, is of a bad tendency, and cannot have failed to have given the falsely delicate, the over-refined, and the idolizers of themselves, additional encouragement in the affectation of misery.

Mournful elegies, night thoughts, and contemplations on gloomy subjects, have a tendency to diffuse a shade over the imagination which causes in many a misery no less real than actual suffering; and they countenance more in seeking the gratification of a perverse vanity, by pretending to singular wretchedness. There is certainly a great portion of evil in the world, real and unavoidable, and it seems a peculiar degree of folly to increase it by affectation. Affectation will increase it; for we become in time the characters which we have habitually assumed. In this country, where the inhabitants are naturally inclined to a dejection of spirits, it is particularly wrong to indulge the imagination in giving a sombrous and dismal color to every thing around it. It is greatly in our power to make the horizon of our mind dark and cloudy, or serene as the blue æther, and beautiful as the variegated tints of a western sky in a fine summer evening.

It is a question in philosophy, *An quicquid recipitur, recipiatur ad modum recipientis, Whether whatever is received* (or *perceived*, as it suits the present subject better) *be perceived according to the percipient's mode, or powers, or degree of perception?* and I think it may be often answered, when applied to morals, in the affirmative. There is absolute good in life, and absolute evil; but they both may be in a great degree transformed by the manner in which they are viewed and possessed. A sour disposition, operating like a chemical acid, will turn the sweetest cup into an unpalatable beverage; as a contented, placid, meek, and gentle mind, infusing sweetness into the bitterest draught, will cause the most nauseous medicine to be swallowed with complacence.

To enjoy, and to be cheerful, are duties. "To enjoy," says Mr. Pope, "is to obey." And though it is natural, and often unavoidable, to complain in affliction; yet to murmur, repine, and take a pleasure in complaining, while we have many reasons to rejoice, is irrational and ungrateful.

The sect of whiners, or grumblers (for it deserves to

be stigmatized by no very honorable name,) furnishes a very proper subject for ridicule. It is fruitless to argue deeply or very seriously with folly and vanity. You will either not be understood by them, or not regarded; but a laugh against them, is like an instrument which touches to the quick, amputates the excrescence, or pulls it up by the roots.

Real misery will, I hope, always meet with sympathy. Nature has taken care that it should touch our feelings, in order to extort relief if possible. But the affectation of it, whether in books, in life or in conversation, must find a different treatment, that it may be discountenanced.

Great caution, however, should be always used, not to mistake real for affected misery. It is better that many pretenders to woe should be treated with superfluous sympathy and unnecessary attention, than that one real sufferer should be disregarded.

EVENING XIV.

ON THE DESTRUCTION OF ANCIENT MANSION HOUSES.

IT is not without concern, that men of taste and reflection behold the noble mansion houses of our forefathers either utterly forsaken and fallen into ruins, or meanly sold under the hammer, for the price of the dismembered materials. Where the hospitable hearth once blazed, and the turret bell sounded cheerfully at noon, the owl now screams, the eft and the toad crawl unmolested, nettles and briars luxuriantly vegetate, and not one stone is left upon another to tell that here dwelt charity, heroism, and magnificence.

As I was wandering over the site of an ancient Baron's castle, the very rubbish of which had been sold to pay a debt of honor contracted at a chocolate house in St. James's-street, methought I saw one of its ancient inhabitants arising from the ground, and venting his feelings in the following soliloquy:—

"Accursed luxury, and false refinement! To you I must attribute the demolition of a pile which at once did

honor to a race of worthies, and embellished the face of the country. It was built in a stile of architecture characteristic of its inhabitants, bold, solid, substantial, and magnificent. Its gates opened to all the neighboring gentry and yeomanry; and the threshold was worn with the feet of the poor.

"Here stood the chapel. Though superstition sometimes deformed the altar, yet piety and charity made atonement for her errors. Hypocrisy and infidelity, affrighted at the lustre of their awful forms, never approached the place. It afforded solace to age, wisdom to the young, relief to the afflicted, and pleasure and improvement to all the illustrious family and to all the neighbors. But, alas! during fifty years previous to the stone-mason's purchase of the marble pavement, it was used as a dog-kennel; it was defiled with every abomination; and now the very site of it is overgrown with hemlock and deadly night-shade.

"Yonder was a room devoted to the purposes of a dispensary. The art of medicine was but indifferently understood; but what it could do, it did, with a bounty and benevolence that reflected honor on human nature. Ladies, high in rank and fashion, condescended to administer the salutary potion with their own hands, and to pour in oil into the wounds of the traveller, and the poor destitute who had none to help him. Food, clothing, and instruction completed the beneficence of the pious matron; who appeared with a dignity, in these humble offices, the loss of which, no titles, no finery, no studied graces, no fashionable airs of grandeur can compensate. I know it is common to say, that such bounty is no longer necessary since the legal institutions of parochial relief have interposed. But what is the cold assistance, the compelled charity of an upstart and rigid officer, to the kind and voluntary relief afforded by the rich and great, actually and personally applying balm to the afflicted? What is the attendance of a hireling nurse, to the affection of a mother? The bounty and beneficence which is now censured and ridiculed, arose from Christian principles, and did more to promote them, than all the controversial divinity of all the divines united.

"On that ample area rose the spacious and lofty refectory. The first view of it struck the mind with ideas of

grandeur and nobility which the modern saloon, with all its elegance, cannot emulate. The oaken tables were laden with plentiful food; with dishes solid, natural, wholesome, unspoiled by the arts of foreign cookery, which, to please a vitiated palate, converts the gifts of God designed for the sustenance of man, to a slow but certain poison. A race of heroes and heroines sat at the upper table; and the honest rustic was cordially welcomed at the lower. The species of fine gentlemen, powdered and essenced, pale and languid, was unknown in those times, when effeminacy had not reduced the manly form below the standard of healthy women. I own there prevailed a bluntness of manners, which, in the present days, would be deemed roughness; but it was a roughness which led to generous acts in war, and taught a contempt of all mean and unmanly indulgence in peace. I will not deny that the polish of the present times is laudable; but it is often carried to excess: and let it be remembered, that the file may be used till the substance it was to adorn is rendered too thin and weak to retain any value. Truth and sincerity, the best embellishment of a man, are often lost in the refinements of the highly-finished gentleman of modern courts. But it is the province of art to improve and adorn, not to extinguish nature.

"The hospitality which prevailed in that Gothic hall is said to have encouraged gluttony and drunkenness. But, let it be considered that the food was plain, though plentiful; the beverage homely, though highly relished by the unspoiled palate. And let actual observation determine, whether gluttony, advanced to its highest degree by art; and drunkenness inflamed by exquisite wines and distillation, do not disgrace the selfish orgies of the modern feast. In the old times, the middle and the lowest orders were permitted freely to partake the great man's banquet. It contributed at once to their necessities and their enjoyment. But at the table of modern luxury, the superfluous viands are usually open only to those who are already satiated with dainties, and know no appetite but that which high seasoning provokes. There remains all the intemperance, without the generosity, of our grand-sires; all the vices of riot, without the virtues of charity to cover them.

"But allowing all that can be claimed by modern re-

finement, and I own that, in many things, it is to be preferred to the rudeness and grossness of less civilized times; yet I must bear my testimony against the prevailing practise of demolishing the noble edifices which the worthies of past times erected with a splendor equal to their munificence. I cannot bear to see the land desolated by mean avarice. I cannot bear to see the mansion of old bountiful families forsaken for the petty villa fit only for a retired trader. Taste, as well as manly virtue, suffer by such littleness when it appears in men, who are raised to distinction by the merits of those ancestors whom they despise." He was proceeding, when he was interrupted by the arrival of a smart young man, the lord of the land, with a pale face and meagre form, who sat lolling in his vis-à-vis with a hackneyed courtezan, drawn by four cropt greys, and driven rapidly over the site of the ancient castle. The venerable progenitor lifted up his hands and eyes with silent indignation, and then vanished in despair.

EVENING XV.

ON THE DESIRE OF DISTINCTION BY LIVING BEYOND AN INCOME.

PHILOSOPHERS have often compared individuals of the human race to the various animals of the irrational creation. Some are said to resemble foxes, some hogs, and others asses; and the resemblance has been supposed to be so great as to contribute something to the support of the Pathagorean Metempsychosis. I believe the philosophers would not have erred, if, while they were reciting resemblances, they had said, that a great part of mankind are like the peacock, which appears to take its greatest pleasure, and to place its chief good, in the display of its finery. As to the transmigration of souls, some have thought that so great an attention to the gaudy appearance of the body, argues something in these persons against the existence of the soul at all; so that I do not pretend to corroborate, from the circumstance of

their likeness to the bird of Juno, the whimsical doctrine of old Pythagoras.

To make a figure, to the utmost extent of their ability, is the ultimate scope of many; as to expand the plumage of its tail in all its pride, is the supreme bliss of the peacock; whose internal qualities, and real value (which, by the way, are in that respect like those of the vain votaries of fashion,) by no means correspond with the ostentatious appearance of the plumage.

As the desire of distinction is natural, so the wish to make a figure, even in externals, while it is limited by right reason, and urges not to the violation of prudence and justice, is innocent at least, though scarcely laudable. But it is found in this age to lead to an expensive mode of living, and to the affectation of a splendor greatly above what the rank of the parties requires, and their fortunes can support.

The house must be larger, the servants more numerous, the table more luxurious, and the equipage more splendid than either a sense of decorum, or a prudential regard to the permanent interest of the family, can admit. And what is the inducement? The hope of being received into company which assumes the envied title of people of fashion. The aspirants at this honor are indeed sometimes received; but if it is suspected that they make a show without much substance to support it, they are commonly held in low esteem; and the subterfuges they are obliged to use to conceal their inferiority, render the state, which, after much difficulty, they have obtained, truly uneasy. They indeed enjoy, in fancy, the pleasure of gratified pride, and are too rapidly whirled in the circle which they have chosen, to find leisure for reflection. But this is a state which no rational creature, who possesses the faculty of which he boasts as his noblest distinction can deem desirable. And yet, for the sake of this distinction, what sacrifices are made! Health, peace, and the plenty of a competency, are the usual price of the dear-bought purchase. Neither do these ostentatious people enjoy themselves sincerely; for they are conscious of imprudence and injustice; and however they may attempt to stifle the voice of reason, they will sometimes be compelled to hear it; if not at the assembly and masquerade, yet on their *pillows, and* in their chamber, when, after all their ef-

forts to escape, they are under an unavoidable necessity of *communing with themselves, and of being still.*

The creditors and the children of the numerous tribes who live above their rank and fortune, experimentally feel and deplore that my representation is no fiction. Creditors wait so long for payment as to lose their profit in the interest, and often rejoice if they receive ten shillings in the place of twenty. Many of them have been reduced to beggary by supplying the vain with the necessaries of life; for it so happens, that those who supply superfluities, are often paid with ostentatious liberality and alacrity; while he who sells bread, meat, and raiment, is obliged to take out a commission of bankrupt, or sue in vain for his just due by a tedious and vexatious process of the law.

The children of *ambitious paupers* suffer cruelly. They are introduced into a walk of life which they must relinquish for ever on the departure of their parents. The money that should have been kept as a reservoir to supply their wants during life, in adversity, and in old age, has flowed in profusion to furnish superfluities in the season of health and youth. Their sentiments, habits, pleasures, and prospects, are all in high life; yet their fortunes are such as must detain them in a state of dependence, if not of servitude.* But supposing enough left to enable a large family to live in competent plenty, yet, as they have been used to ostentation and luxury, that plenty which would otherwise have afforded comfort, and been considered as a blessing, is viewed in the light of penury and meanness; and that middle station, in which they were born, and might have enjoyed as much happiness as belongs to human nature, is deplored by them as a fallen state. Consequently, instead of feeling and displaying a cheerful and contented gratitude, they murmur and repine throughout their lives, at their unfortunate degradation.

I knew a family, the father of which had an old paternal estate of five hundred a year. There were five children to it enjoy with him while he lived, and to inherit it when he should die. But his lady was of opinion that he

* Hic vivimus ambitiosa paupertate omnes. *Juv.*

.....Though poor yet proud....we vie
With others in....ambitious poverty.

would serve his family most, by introducing them company and life, and forming valuable connections. truth was, she loved a gay and dissipated scene, an but too successful in persuading her husband to adop plan. A style and mode of living were immediatel gaged in, which would require on the most moderate putation, one thousand a year. There was no mode creasing the income, the father having no profession being above trade. The whole time and attention family was devoted to dress, fashionable diversions, visiting a circle of neighbors, some of whom were India nabobs, baronets, and lords. The consequenc unavoidable. On the death of their parents, the ch found that every foot of land, and all the goods and tels, belonging to importunate creditors, who after h sustained a heavy loss, eagerly seized all the rems of property; so that they saw themselves, literally worth a single shilling. They might, with much re be unhappy in their situation, as their hopes and pro had once been so elevated; but their misery was mu creased by their inability to render themselves use society, and to compensate the unkindness of their fo by personal exertion; for they really had learned no but the arts of dress, and the expensive modes of fas able life. Two of the sons were sent to the East I by the interest of a compassionate neighbor; one to the highway, and, after a narrow escape, was oblig transport himself into Africa: the daughters went int vice, but being above it, were discarded with insult sick of attempting in vain, one died of disappointi and the other sought dishonest bread in the misery of titution. So ended the splendor, the luxury, the pr a family, which, if it could have been contented wit comforts of a most valuable competency might a time have been flourishing in reputation, plenty and perity. Many similar cases occur, where the misc innocent children has been caused by the vanity o thinking parents, led astray by the *ignis fatuus* of va aping the manners of high and fashionable life.

But what? is there no such thing as solid comfort a *moderate* fortune, and in the middle state? Mus *forever labor* to leave the rank in which Providence *placed us, in order to* relish our existence? Must

guilty of injustice and cruelty, in order to be happy? Believe it not. Things are not so constituted. But the votaries of vanity, though they may possess a good share of natural understanding, are usually furnished but slenderly with philosophy and religion. They know not how to chuse for themselves the CHIEF GOOD but, blindly following the multitude, suffer themselve to be led, in the journey of life, by the false light of a vapor, rather than by the certain guidance of the polar star, or the magnetic needle.

I wish I could induce them to consider duly the nature and value of SOLID COMFORT. But we do consider it, say they; we consider what pleases ourselves, and we pursue it with constancy. Are you convinced, I ask in return, that what you pursue affords you pleasure? Is it not true, on the contrary, that you live rather to please others than yourselves? You certainly live in the eyes of others; of others, as vain and proud of externals and of trifles as yourselves; and in their applause or admiration you place your felicity. So long as you can display the tinsel appearance of gaiety and ease, you patiently submit to the real and total want of the substance. I urge you then again, to pursue solid comforts, and relinquish vanity. You ask me to describe what I mean by solid comforts. It is easy to conceive them; but as you desire it, I will attempt the obvious enumeration, and then leave you to your own dispassionate and unprejudiced reflections.

Solid comforts may be copiously derived from the following sources: a quiet conscience, health, liberty, one's time one's own, or if not, usefully, innocently, and moderately employed by others; a freedom from inordinate passions of all kinds; a habit of living within one's income, and of saving something for extraordinary occasions; an ability, arising from rational œconomy, to defray all necessary and expedient expences; a habit of good humor, and aptitude to be pleased rather than offended; a preparation for adversity; love of one's family, sincerity to friends, benevolence to mankind, and piety to God.

Compare this state and these dispositions with those of affected people of fashion, embarrassed in circumstances, distressed by vain cares, tossed about by various passions and vain fancies, without any anchor to keep their frail bark from the violence of every gust. But it is not neces-

sary to dilate on the comparison ; let the hearts of the deluded votaries of vanity decide upon it in the silence of the night season, when they recline on their pillows, when the lights of the assembly are extinguished, and the rattling of carriages is heard no more.

EVENING XVI.

ON THE RETIREMENT OF TRADESMEN AND PERSONS LONG USED TO BUSINESS AND ACTION, TO RURAL LIFE AND THE EMPLOYMENTS OF AGRICULTURE.

THE pleasures of rural life form one of the common-places of the poets, and they have adorned it with the richest colors of fanciful description. He who believes their representations, will deem nothing more conducive to his happiness, than to fly to the remotest wilds, to forests dark with shade, to rivulets gliding over pebbles, to plains clothed with verdure, covered with flocks, and resounding with the shepherd's pipe. That pastoral poets should indulge in such luxuriant descriptions, is not wonderful: but even Horace, a man of the world and the poet of common sense, has in some passages, yielded to the delusion, and endeavored to extend it.

The *employments* of agriculture, and the life of the husbandman, have been also described by the poets, to use the language of Addison on another occasion, as

> Profuse of bliss and pregnant with delight.

Under these two prepossessions, the one in favor of rural felicity, and the other of the joys of farming ; the man of business in town, whether professional or commercial, has toiled for gain, with the hope of retiring into the country in middle or declining life ; which he indulges with no less ardor, than if he were going into Elysium on the day of his long-wished-for retreat from Cheapside.

But the blaze which imagination kindled has been extinguished on approaching it ; the vision of happiness has vanished like a dream, on hastening to its actual enjoyment.

It is natural to enquire into the cause of the disappoint-

ment. Rural delights are certainly great; though exaggerated by the poets' fancy. Rural employments are certainly natural, amusing, and healthy; though extolled too highly, when represented as furnishing delight unalloyed with vexation.

Persons who retire to rural life raise their expectations too high, above the pitch which human enjoyments are ever found to attain. A golden age, when the earth brought forth her fruits with spontaneous exuberance, must be revived to satisfy the ideas of felicity which they have connected with the operations of agriculture.

Success in farming, and without success there can be no pleasure in it, depends on the labors of those who are commonly unwilling to labor hard for a gentleman, or man of fortune, and who, under the appearance of rustic simplicity, conceal a low cunning scarcely compatible with honesty. The defective work, the exorbitant demands, the discontented dispositions of these persons, soon give a very different idea of rural swains, hinds and shepherds, than was received from the poets. These alone are able to convince a man of his error who retires to a farm as to AN occupation of uninterrupted tranquillity. Though his circumstances should be such as cannot be affected by their injurious treatment, yet his temper will probably be tried by their perverse behavior. He may not be deeply wounded; but his ease will be effectually destroyed for a time, though he should be only scratched by a bramble, or pricked by a thorn.

Inclement weather and unfavorable seasons, combining with improper management, render the produce of the farm, after great expence and no little solicitude, scanty and ill-conditioned. The object, in a lucrative view, is perhaps inconsiderable; but disappointment even in trifles, when the heart is set upon them, is bitter. Thorns and briars, thistles and nettles, are the crop where wheat was cultivated, or where figs and grapes were expected. Instead of seeing lands laughing with corn, the disappointed gentleman-farmer hangs, in a pensive posture, over the gate of the field, that smiles, as it were in mockery, with the red poppy, the blue bugloss, the yellow charlock, the white bearbind, the silky mallow, and the feather-topped dandelion.

If he has purchased a little manor, the poacher plagues

him with his wires, and the unqualified sportsman harrasses him with trespasses. Every hare, partridge, and pheasant, that he sees dispatched to London, he believes to be stolen from himself. Neither night nor day can be spent in perfect security. His money he can lock up in his chest, but patridges have wings, hares are fleet, and poachers subtle and indefatigable. The carp and tench are stolen from his ponds. School-boys and idle neighbors ensnare his trout, and troll for his pike, without his permission. All these things render what amuses and profits others, a mortification to the poor possessor*.

If he delights in a garden, there also vexation will spring up among the choicest fruits and flowers. See yonder wall most beautifully covered with peaches, that blush like the cheeks of Hebe or Maria. He has chosen the trees with the nicest judgment, trained them with incessant care, and now they are ripe; and to-morrow the finest shall be culled, for it is Maria's birth-day. To-morrow's sun arises, and, lo! the wall is stripped. Some caitiff, at the midnight hour, plucked them all with unrelenting hand, and by this time they are safely lodged in Covent Garden market.

He delighted in poultry. He fed the chickens and ducklings with his own hand. He chose the most beautiful in plumage, the largest in size, the finest for the table. But the soldiers quartered in the neighborhood, and that varlet, Reynard, have stolen them all, but a few that were shut up in a coop to be fattened for new year's day. These, however, he preserves; but upon computing the expence, he finds that he might have bought them much fatter and finer of farmer Hodge at half the expence.

He fattens his own hogs, and every bit of pork stands him in double the money he could buy it for at the butcher's. He keeps a dairy, but the cows die with disease, the calves are still-born, the butter rancid for want of care, and the milk sour. Hodge would supply his table with every article, cent per cent cheaper than he can make it at home, without trouble, or the hazard of a bad commodity.

Fortunately for the crows and the dogs, he keeps a lit-

* *Et dominum fallunt et prosunt furibus.* Hor.

The owner loses and the thief obtains.

tle flock of sheep, with the prettiest musical bells ever heard in the country. But for want of skill and care in the management, half of them die of the rot, or are worried by the mastiff to death. Those which he kills, furnish his table with an inferior mutton as dear as venison.

He brews his own beer, presses his own cider, and bakes his own bread; but three times out of four the beer has an ill taste, through want of skill and cleanliness of the casks; the cider is vapid; and the bread, luckily for the pigs, heavy.

Add to this and a thousand other mortifications of a similar kind, that the comforts of a neighborhood are often destroyed by causes which appear trivial, but are very momentous in a village. The squire rides over his seed in hunting, breaks down his painted Chinese pales, and saws off the first rail of his seven-barred gate, which he had caused to be made, with great taste, by a London carpenter. The clergyman demands tithes of his sheep, pigs, poultry, eggs, and milk; and as he is determined to resist extortion, he goes to law for five shillings, and is cast with costs that amount to a hundred pounds. No neighborly intercourse can continue. So far from a comfortable reciprocation of good offices, that scarcely common civility is observed. Not even a bow at church, or the common salutation of a "how do you do?" when the parties meet by the casualties of the day. Rural sociality is often bound by cobweb bands.

Thus uncomfortable, he is ready to exclaim with sighs,

Vitæ me redde priori. *Hor.*

O! make me what I was before.

and looks back with regret on the ease, plenty, liberty, and society of the city which he once detested.

But I do not mean that a conclusion should be drawn, that the country and rural employments are not able to furnish much pleasure. My wish is, to convince persons who retire into the country late in life, for EASE ONLY.* that they must not raise their expectations of rural happiness too high; and that in pursuit of ease, they ought

* ....ut in otia tuta recedant. *Hor.*

To find a safe recess.

not to engage in farming to any great extent, because it is an employment full of anxiety and care, subject to much disappointment, and as little adapted to procure ease, as the commerce of the busy trader, the employments of the statesman, the lawyer, or the physician. He who wishes, on retirement, to enjoy all the tranquillity which the country can afford, should rather be a spectator than a sharer in the employments of agriculture; and be satisfied with inhaling the sweet air, and viewing the delightful scenes of the country, without troubling himself, unless he is skilled in husbandry, to raise and produce those necessary commodities of life, which he may purchase at the market cheaper and better without any anxiety.

EVENING XVII.

ON XENOPHON'S MEMOIRS OF SOCRATES, AND THE INFERIORITY OF TRANSLATIONS TO THE ORIGINALS.

A PERSON who should walk about the streets of a great city like Athens or London, and give his opinion on all subjects to those whom he might happen to meet, would be thought, in the present age, a ridiculous enthusiast, or a pitiable madman. Yet it is certain, that he whom the world has long revered, as the wisest of mortals, dispensed his advice in this manner, and was, while alive, the object of envy rather than of contempt, as he has been since his death, of admiration.

Socrates committed not the philosophy which he thus disseminated, to writing; and the world would have been deprived of the inestimable treasure, if his grateful scholars, Xenophon and Plato, had not preserved it.

Xenophon's *Memorabilia* or Memoirs of him abound with a most admirable morality; yet I hope the admirers of ancient wisdom will pardon me, when I presume to say, that many of the conversations are tediously protracted, and that the great Socrates, in the abundance of his good-humor, trifles egregiously. It is however equitable to suppose that, to insinuate his important advice with success, it was necessary to avoid alarming the minds

of his hearers, and that the beginning of his conversations should have an air of alluring levity. This levity was probably in unison with the minds of those careless passengers whom he addressed. It drew their attention. They would have shut their ears against every thing which he had to offer, if he had begun by professing a design to reclaim them from vice and folly, in a formal and severe harangue. They would have hastened from him, and turned his attempts to ridicule. But his jocularity detained them, and his good sense, in the conclusion, pointed out their errors, and taught them the expediency of a reformation. Yet though this may apologize for levity and trifling, in the actual conversations of the living Socrates, it cannot render them entirely agreeable to a judicious reader of modern times, for whom the artifice is not necessary.

I read Xenophon's *Memorabilia* in Greek, while at school, and I was delighted with them. I read them afterwards in an English translation, and I found them in many places tedious and insipid. The translation was apparantly performed with sufficient fidelity; but it did not affect or strike with any peculiar force. I have experienced effects exactly similar to this in the perusal of other books in the moſt celebrated translations. To what shall I attribute them? Are there such charms in the Greek language, as are able to give a value to sentiments which of themselves have no recommendation? Certainly not: But there is a conciseness, and, at the same time, a force and comprehension of expression in the Greek language besides its harmony, which, I think, the English cannot equal. On the mind of a reader, who completely understands the language of a Greek author, the ideas are impressed with more vivacity and perspicuity by the original, than by any translation into modern languages. The ancient Greek authors, it is acknowledged, paid great attention to the art of composition, to the choice and arrangement of words, and to the structure of periods; so as to communicate the idea, or raise the sentiment intended, with peculiar force and precision. Xenophon is known to have been one of the most successful cultivators of the art of composition; and it cannot be supposed, that all who have undertaken to translate his works, though they might understand the matter, could

have equalled him in style and expression, for which his country and himself were remarkably celebrated. To represent him adequately they must have possessed a style in English equal to his style in Greek.

The pleasure which a reader feels in the perusal of a Greek author, has been attributed to the pride of conscious superiority, over thoe who are not able to unlock the treasures of which he keeps a key. This opinion has owed its origin to the poor appearance which some of the most celebrated authors of antiquity have made, when presented to the public in the dress of a modern language. The English reader has read translations of the classics, without being able to discover any excellence adequate to the universal reputation of the author. The translator, though he comprehended his authors, and was faithful as to the *meaning*, was perhaps a *poor writer*, unable to communicate properly, the thoughts which he conceived with a sufficient degree of accuracy. The blame unjustly fell on the original author, and on his admirers. *He* was supposed to have written poorly, and *they* to have admired him only from motives of pride and pedantical affectation. Some, whose ignorance prevented them from deciding fairly, rejoiced to see that ancient learning, which they possessed not, despised; and eagerly joined in attributing to arrogance and pedantry, all praise of Greek and Latin, to which they were inveterate enemies, as well as perfect strangers. Thus Greek and Latin studies fell into disrepute.

But the supposition that the pleasure which men feel in reading authors in the ancient languages, arises solely, or chiefly, from the pride of possessing a skill in those languages, is too unreasonable to be generally admitted. Of the many thousand admirers of the ancients, who, in every part of their conduct and studies, displayed great judgment and love of truth, must we suppose the greater part, either deceived in the estimate of the authors whom they read, or actuated by pride, and mistaking the self-complacency of conscious learning and ability, for the pleasure naturally arising from the study of a fine author? Why is not a man, who understands Welsh, German, Dutch, or any other language not remarkable *for* literary productions, as much inclined to extol the *writers in* those languages, as the reader of Greek and

Latin, if the motive for praise consists only in possessing a knowledge of a languge unknown to the majority of his countrymen or companions?

In accounting for the great esteem in which the Greek and Latin authors are held, much must be attributed to the LANGUAGES SOLELY, exclusively of thought, doctrine, or method. Many mere English readers who are but poorly qualified to give an opinion on the subject, will impute it to pedantry, when I say, that those languages possess inherent beauties, and an aptitude for elegant and expressive composition, to which the best among modern languages can make no just pretension. Till, therefore, an ancient Greek author can be translated into a language equal to his own, it will be unjust and unreasonable to form a final judgment of him from the best translation. It is better to read a good author in a translation, than not to read him at all. I only contend against the injustice of condemning original authors in consequence of the unavoidable imperfections of all translations into the modern languages of Europe.

But, to return to Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, with the consideration of which I began this paper. It has been usual, among the admirers of Socratic morality, to compare it with the evangelical. I am ready to acknowledge the great excellence of it; but I see clearly, that it is no more to be compared to the gospel, than the river Nile to the Pacific Ocean. It seems not to flow from the heart, and it cannot reach its recesses. It knows little of universal charity. It taught not the golden rule of doing to others as we wish they should do unto us.

I cannot, however, avoid recommending the *Socraticæ Chartæ*, or the fine *Ethics* of Socrates, as preserved by Xenophon and Plato, to every student who is designed for the sacred profession. He will there find a store of fine observations, maxims, and precepts, which he may recommend with authority and success to his people, under the sanction, and with the improvements, of Christianity.*

Dr. Edwards's attempt to discover *a system* in the *Memorabilia* of Socrates, notwithstanding its ingenuity, seems to be unsuccessful. It resembles the ingenious efforts of

* Socraticæ Chartæ quem non fecere disertum? *Hor.*
Socratic lore with eloquence inspires.

many critics to reduce Horace's Epistle *ad Pisones* on the art of poetry, to the methodical regularity of a technical recipe for making poems. Some critics, like the old gardeners, have no idea of beauty, unless every thing is laid out by the line and rule, the level and the square. But mathematical precision is not required in moral disquisition.

EVENING XVIII.

ON A SPECIES OF INJUSTICE IN PRIVATE LIFE. IN A LETTER.

SIR,

THERE is a species of injustice and cruelty in parents to their children, which has not, I think, been stigmatized with the infamy which it justly deserves. It is not uncommon in fathers, to permit the visits of a lover to his daughter, till the affections of both are engaged, and a clandestine marriage takes place; and then to profess a great dislike to the match, and a very warm displeasure, merely to avoid the payment of a portion. If the father is asked, why he encouraged the lover at first; he answers, that he did not imagine that he visited as a lover, though it was evident enough to every one else, and could not, from the attention paid, be unobserved by the father. The truth is, that he saw with pleasure the mutual passion, and gave every opportunity for its increase, by furnishing opportunities of intercourse, by studied occasions of absence; and even knew of the intended marriage, and took care to be from home at the time he expected it to be celebrated, lest by some accident he should be obliged to make the full discovery, which would frustrate his purpose This disingenuous and crafty conduct is often productive of great misery.

Mr. Marston was a young surgeon of good connections, good abilities, good person, and with a competent income, from a place under government. Having a prospect of settling very advantageously in a genteel neighborhood, he thought it proper to seek a matrimonial alliance. He visited in the family of a physician of no

great practice, who had several very accomplished and beautiful daughters, the eldest of whom, Eliza, soon attracted his particular attention. He made no secret of his attachment, but openly avowed it, and behaved with all the frankness of an honorable lover. He could not but consider the father's silence as a tacit consent: but, after the expiration of two years assiduous and successful courtship, he asked the permission of the father to fix a day for the celebration of the nuptials. The father, at the mention of it, started back with affected astonishment, and peremptorily insisted on his discontinuing to visit at his house. No intreaties could avail, and Mr. Marston retired in disconsolate acquiescence. But the links of love were not to be broken. The father went a journey into the North, and the lovers seized the opportunity of cementing an union by marriage, which they did not doubt would soon be sanctioned by the approbation of a parent, who could not but have observed the commencement and increase of their mutual affection.

The father returned. The young couple wanted only his approbation to complete their felicity. They waited upon him together, and in terms of affectionate duty, solicited his pardon and his blessing. He received them with a haughtiness and severity which he had never before displayed; and told them, on their departure, never more to approach his house, for he should give orders to his servants to deny him, whenever they should come to his door.

After the lapse of some time, when they expected his severity might be mitigated by reflection, they applied to him by a letter, expressing their hope, that as he had not discouraged Mr. Marston's first visits, but suffered a passion to grow under his eye, he would not be emplacably angry with them, for a conduct which was the natural consequence of such indulgence. A respectful hint was added, that as he signified an intention to give his daughter a small fortune on their marriage, it would now be particularly acceptable, as Mr. Marston wanted to take a genteel house and furnish it, without which measure it would be difficult, if not impossible, to enter on the practice of his profession with a prospect of success.

No answer was given to this letter during several months; when, on a second remonstrance, a verbal mes-

sage was sent by the Father, informing them, that as they had followed their own inclinations without consulting him, they must take the consequences, and live upon love if they could, for that he should not give them a single penny before his decease. It was added, that they need not apply any more; for this resolution was not the effect of a momentary fit of displeasure, but the result of the maturest deliberation.

Mr. Marston, rather than involve himself in debt, retired to lodgings in a little village, hoping that time would effect a reconciliation, and produce that pecuniary assistance, without which he found it impossible to be established. Year after year elapsed, with an increase of family, and a consequent increase of expences. He endeavored to obtain a little country practice, but though he was much respected, the profits of a surgeon only, unconnected with the business of an apothecary, added but little to his income, and he was obliged to incur debt, which notwithstanding the utmost frugality, amounted in time to a considerable sum. No assistance came from the father, who loving money above all things, continued to accumulate his store with the most miserly parsimony. But as the father was old, Mr. Marston thought he could not long be kept from that portion which he thought himself entitled to, and which was indeed now become necessary to his family's subsistence. Many years had passed in this uncomfortable situation, when grief and anxiety, which had long preyed on Mr. Marston's bosom, put a period to his existence at the age of thirty-six, and left a widow and eight children, with scarcely enough to procure the necessaries of the day. The old gentleman now relented; but it was too late. He, who by his abilities in his profession, might have raised his family to opulence, was gone for ever; and his companion, agitated by every feeling which wears away a tender frame, soon followed him. Eight orphans stood round the grave in which the tenderest of parents were both deposited, Every spectator was affected with sympathy except the father, who, while the clergyman performed the office, was railing at the undertaker in the church-yard, for supplying a handsomer and more expensive coffin than he had ordered.

The children, whom he would not speak to, were

sent to the house of a poor mechanic, with orders to clothe them cheaply, and take care of them, till they were respectively of age to be put out apprentices. Destitute of education, and without a true friend to guide them, they turned out unfortunately, ran away from their trades, entered in low situations into the army and navy, married imprudently, or died early of intemperance. Thus a family became wretched and extinct, which, if it had been fostered, as it ought to have been, by the parent who encouraged the first advances of a lover, from the mean idea of getting rid of the expence of a daughter, would have probably lived in a respectable and happy condition.

Wretched avarice! despicable cunning! which can thus dissolve the closest bands of nature, and produce misery of the deepest kind, among those whom a parent is bound by all that can bind the human bosom, to render as easy and happy as the condition of humanity will allow.

Let the trick of a father, who encourages or connives at the visits of a lover till mutual affection is rivetted; and, after the consequent marriage affects anger as an excuse for saving his money, be henceforth considered as infamous; and let young men, who have a just value for their own happiness, and the happiness of the woman whom they love, be henceforth on their guard, lest they fall into a snare so contemptible and mischievous.

EVENING XIX.

ON THE RASHNESS OF YOUNG AND ADVENTUROUS WRITERS IN MEDICINE.

WHENEVER men of liberal education and long experience have presented their medical remarks to the public, they have justly obtained the praise of ingenuity and benevolence. Fame increased their practice, and practice rewarded them with well-earned opulence. Who can deserve it better, than he, of whom it can justly be said, that he is* OPIFER PER URBEM, in his prac-

* "*Opifer per Orbem*" is the motto of the Apothecary's company. It is said of *Apollo* in Ovid's Metamorphoses. Applied to the medical assistant; it signifies "one ready to afford universal medical assistance."

tice, and PER ORBEM, in his communications to the public ?

But others, observing that such have owed their celebrity, and consequently their fortunes, to a pamphlet or treatise, on some particular disease, have resolved, at all events, to write and publish a pamphlet or treatise, as soon as they have bought their diploma, or as an introduction to that honor.

In order to attract notice, it became necessary to *distinguish* their works, among a multitude of others, by some extraordinary doctrine or position; and I am informed, that things of a most dangerous tendency, and sometimes certainly fatal, have been plausibly recommended by fool-hardy or knavish candidates for medical popularity. AUDE ALIQUID,* *strike a bold stroke*, seems to be considered by many as a prescription for procuring practice.

The great object of such persons is to recommend something *new*, something extraordinary, something that marks a genius, either as a medicament, or as a chirurgical operation. If poison can be administered, in any form, without certain and immediate death, it is soon advanced to the rank of a *panacea*, and the inventor hopes to equal Radcliffe in riches, and Heberden in fame.

Time shews the inefficacy of the boasted invention; but it is to be feared, that many fall victims to it, before the full discovery of its ill effects, or the danger of relying upon it because of its inutility, in extreme or difficult cases.

Whoever takes a retrospective view of medicines which a few years ago were highly extolled, and generally used, will find many of them at present in total disrepute. Yet, if you will believe the writings, which recommended them on their first appearance, their beneficial efficacy was indubitably confirmed by innumerable cases. If they were efficacious once, they are probably still efficacious; for it is not to be believed that, by any causes whatever, the human body can have undergone a total change since their introduction. But they are now perhaps pronounced

* Aude aliquid brevibus gyaris vel carcere dignum. *Juv.*
Dare something worthy of the hulks or gaol
Or Botany's famed bay.....

by the best judges utterly inefficacious or pernicious; and there is reason therefore to conclude that they were always so; and owed their popularity and success to novelty, or to the activity, address, and recommendation, of some artful professor of medicine.

But though the world might profit by uniform experience of the fallacy of medical pretensions, yet, as there is always a new generation rising, the same arts are again practised, and practised with dangerous success. In nothing are men more easily deluded than in the pretensions of medical practitioners.

It must be acknowledged, that the temerity of making experiments may casually lead to improvements in medical science; but it is a cruel temerity; for experiments in medicine are made on the sick at the hazard of life. A young man who hastily recommends to the public a powerful medicine, without due experience of its effect, which is too common in the present times, may be guilty of homicide, in a thousand melancholy instances, when he intended only to advance his own fame and fortune.

The spirit of research and adventure is indeed laudable in young men; but, when it produces works to the public which endanger health and life, it ought to be under greater restraint, than the sanguine disposition of raw practitioners, inventors, and projectors, is willing to allow. I appeal however to their humanity; and hope they will condescend to submit their treatises, previously to publition, to three or four of the most eminent and oldest physicians (or surgeons, if the subject be chirurgical,) and even after that, to express themselves with doubt and diffidence on the certainty of their discoveries and the infallibility of their remedies. They will act humanely, as well as prudently, by adding *a Chapter of Cautions* in the use of whatever they recommend.

Indeed, if medical publications were read only by medical professors and practitioners, there is reason to hope, that the rashness of a writer might be corrected by the caution and skilful experience of the *professional* reader. But, in these times, every man and woman reads a book, in which they think themselves interested; and the *sanguine* pamphlet of a young physician, who is able to dress his fancies in a language tolerably agreeable and perspicuous, falls into the hands of those, who are totally

ignorant of medicine, both practical and theoretic, and who, imagining their own case to be exactly described in the book, take the medicine, just as it is prescribed, without regard to the difference of age, seasons, or symptoms. Constitutions are thus ruined by those who speciously pretend to have discovered their preservative.

It is a sad instance of human depravity, that, from motives of sordid interest or foolish vanity, men will trifle and tamper with the health and lives of their fellow-creatures, especially when their profession is to cherish health and prolong life.

But since there is no reason to suppose that rash physicians will discontinue the practice of publishing their crudities, it is certainly right to advise invalids, and all inexperienced persons who are not in the medical and chirurgical profession, not to read any books whatever on the subject of physic. This advice is indeed proper, even when the books are acknowledged to be solid, and known to be authenticated by the long practice of the writers; for, such is our weakness, especially in the hour of sickness, that we are apt to imagine every bad symptom, and almost every disease of which we read, to be our own: and the power of the imagination in augmenting disease, is not only well known to physicians, but felt by general experience.

After all that can be said in praise of medicine, it is confessed, by the most sensible physicians, to be a very doubtful point, whether, upon the whole it has been more beneficial or injurious. It is an uncertain art. This point however is not uncertain, but very clear, that in the hands of the young, the inexperienced, and the rash, it is dreadfully destructive of the human race. What must it be then, when *every man is his own physician?* When he reads a crude pamphlet on a disease under which he supposes himself to labor, and, without any preparatory knowledge, administers boldly whatever is recommended in the confidence of ignorance, or with the specious persuasion of a self-interested writer? Abstain therefore from medical books; and apply, in sickness, to the best physician or apothecary within reach of your situation. Professional men themselves do not usually prescribe for themselves or families, in extreme cases; but call in the assistance of those who, with every advantage of specula-

tive and practical skill, have also the additional advantage of being able to act with a cooler and more deliberate judgment than any man can usually exert, when his own health and happiness are deeply interested.

Among the inconveniencies attending the multitude of books in the present times, it is one, that every man is instructed by some interested devulger of mysteries, to be his own operator or counsellor in every department. Every man may be his own Lawyer, Physician, Divine, Gardener, Broker and Builder. This, it might be supposed, would injure the several professors; but experience seems to prove that it serves them; every man attempting every thing for himself, without experience, and solely by the partial and imperfect directions of books, renders every thing he undertakes worse; and the professor is called in at last, and finds much more employment, than if his assistance had been sought before the bungling efforts of ignorance had rashly interposed.

EVENING XX.

ON THE BOOKS AND FUGITIVE WRITINGS WHICH ARE PROPER FOR THE AMUSEMENT OF SMALL PORTIONS OF LEISURE.

THERE are fragments of time in the life of every man, in which, from some inconvenience of his circumstances, he is unable to read with continued attention, or to enjoy the advantages of select company. In those intervals, such books are pleasant as amuse and inform, in very short sections or chapters, and in an easy and perspicuous style, resembling, as much as possible, the variety and familiarity of conversation.

Many of the French books, under the title of ANA, are, I think, particularly useful for the purpose of filling up a vacant interval. They are lively and various. They treat of history, literature, arts; subjects which amuse, without interesting in such a degree, as to fatigue or excite the mind, beyond the pitch of a pleasant and equable tranquillity.

There is a great difference in the numerous *ana*. The best I ever read are not entitled *ana* indeed; but they are

exactly the same in their kind; I mean Melanges *d'Histoire et de Literature, par Monsieur Vigneul Marville.* The name of the real author, it is said, was D'Argonne. The work abounds with pleasing anecdotes, written with grace and vivacity. The part I am displeased with is, the severe hypercriticism on Bruyere. It is ingenious but uncandid, and could proceed only from pique and prejudice. But I am speaking of amusement; and even mistaken criticism, written in the lively manner of D'Argonne, cannot but form an agreeable diversion in an interval of calm leisure.

Gesner recommends *ana* for the *horæ subsecivæ*, and also Choffin's *Amusemens Philologiques*, Martial's Select Epigrams, Owen's Epigrams, Epictetus, Bouhours's *Pensees Ingenieuses*, Phædrus, de la Motte, Fontaine, Valerius Maximus, Erasmus's Apophthegms, and all other similar and detached pieces. None of these require great attention or exertion, and yet they amuse and instruct in a very agreeable manner.

Selden's "*Table Talk*," would be called according to the French fashion, *Seldeniana*, and it is very proper for a pocket companion. Maxims and reflections, collections of poety, letters and fugitive pieces, with which this country abounds, are well adapted to the purpose of occasional amusement.

Indeed the kind of books is sufficiently obvious; and it is not necessary to enumerate them. They must occur spontaneously to every man acquainted with books; but in the present times, they are all in danger of being entirely superceded by the newspapers.

The newspapers as they are now improved are indeed *Melanges* of literature, of history, of criticism, of biography, of politics, of philosophy, of religion, and of every thing that busy mortals pursue with ardor and solicitude.

Their original object was the communication of political news; but they have increased in number, and in size, to such a degree, that to fill them all with a due variety of news, properly so called, is impossible. That source was soon dry, and other fountains were therefore broken up. There can indeed be no good objection to the deviation from the original purpose of political news; for the intention of that was to amuse by the gratification of curiosity; and if innocent amusement, of a similar kind, can be ob-

tained in the heterogeneous matter which they exhibit, they are still valuable and worthy of encouragement.

But in pursuit of distinction and variety, in the gratification of party resentment, and as the tools of faction, many of them have displayed a foul mass of falshood, malignity, and folly; such PERSONAL calumny and detraction, as degrades human nature, and could only have been expected from the agency of infernal spirits supplying the press of a Pandæmonium.

It is therefore become desirable to turn the eye from the public waste in which nettles and weeds, at once poisonous and putrid, vegetate, to cultivated gardens and enclosures. Such are most of the French ANA, the *Melanges* and miscellanies of literature, history, and morality, which I recommend, as the proper amusement of a vacant hour.

The undertaking may be thought to resemble the cleansing of an Augean stable, and to require an Herculean strength, else one might endeavor to produce that desirable object, a reformation of venal and corrupt newspapers. The channels which convey polluted waters might be taught to devolve a pleasant and salubrious stream.

The conductors of newspapers, as many of them are most respectable men, would probably rejoice to see such a reformation, as might enable them to pursue their useful occupations, and promote their private interest, without the necessity of being instrumental to the diffusion of poison through the various ranks of society.

Suppose then that, by mutual agreement, they should oblige themselves to admit nothing which could degrade *well-earned dignity, or injure reputation, or interrupt the peace of families*, without ascertaining the truth of it, by requiring its authenticity to be confirmed by the name of all parties, who should desire to insert a defamatory letter or paragraph.

This precaution would exclude some truth; but it would, at the same time, exclude more falshood and misrepresentation; and newspapers would rise in value and repute, as they would be considered as authentic and respectable records worthy of being consigned to posterity.

If the papers were not of so large dimensions as they are, there would not be a necessity of supplying a quan-

tity of matter merely to fill the columns; and, consequently, a more scrupulous selection might take place.

The King for the time being, and the Judges his representatives, the Church, and all its ministers, as well as all religious instructors, of whatever denomination, should always be mentioned in respectful terms. Their titles and honorable additions should be joined to their names, wherever it can be done without affectation, or tedious formality. It should be considered, that newspapers go into the hands of the vulgar, the ignorant, the idle, the profligate, the thievish, and the abandoned, of every degree and species; and that when once these are taught to speak disrespectfully of their superiors, whether ecclesiastical or civil, much of that subordination is disturbed, which was settled for the benefit of all; and much of that restraint infringed, which tended to keep them within due limits for the general advantage. Lawless principles naturally produce lawless actions; and there is every reason to believe, that much of the dishonesty of the lower orders, much of the riotous spirit of modern times, has been caused by the corruption of newspapers. I speak my thoughts freely, though I know the editors of newspapers have vengeance in their own hands, and are able to repel their assailants, with a lash of scorpions. But the shield of truth is a sufficient defence, and indeed a wound, in a good cause, makes an honorable scar.

Affairs of gallantry, as they are called, should be mentioned, if mentioned at all, with great delicacy. The mention of them at all, unless in cases of particular notoriety, tends only to confirm the impudence of parties concerned, and to increase debauchery by the seduction of example. It was lately usual to fill half a column in certain papers, with paragraphs, to puff the fashionable courtezans of the time, and to serve their interest. It is wonderful that papers, abounding in these subjects, can find admission into regular families, where there are wives and daughters of unsullied reputation.

There are some advertisements so evidently fraudulent, and others so grossly indecent, that he who aspires at the character of a good citizen, will find it difficult to render the publication of them consistent with such a description.

It is not difficult to point out the deformities of some

among the public papers; for the features are prominent; but it is unnecessary. All considerate persons must have considered some prints, particularly where important truth is suppressed by influence, and defamation paid for with public money, as pests and nuisances. I quit the subject, assuring the reader, that I have no personal cause of dislike to any of them. I disapprove of those which to serve a party, sacrifice truth, justice and mercy, because I think them publicly injurious. They have been inimical to all order, propriety, moderation; to virtue, to learning, and to religion: therefore an endeavor to reform them can want no apology. I will add only one hint to the conductors of them which may avail when others are ineffectual. Let them consider, that by degrading newspapers from that dignity which they might possess, as pleasant and useful vehicles of authentic information, and as the most effectual defences against violence and despotism, they may gradually render them too contemptible for general notice. The wickedness of mankind, and the corruption of society, may make such an event not very probable at present; yet it is certain that, in process of time, newspapers may become so worthless, so utterly destitute of truth, as to be universally neglected.

If manners do not effect the reformation of newspapers, laws may hereafter intervene to supply the defect: and since it is the part of the legislature, and of all good government, to suppress every general nuisance, it may be apprehended that the press may be unfortunately restrained, and newspapers abolished or discouraged by an enormous impost. Nothing but the revenue arising from them preserves them at present from some limitations, and which would render them beneficial to society, without that commixture of evil which almost overbalances their advantages

With all their imperfections on their heads, they are upon the whole the best bulwarks of our liberty, and the surest defence of the helpless against the proud man's contumely and the oppressor's wrong. They sound the alarm bell throughout an empire, and no influence is great enough to stifle the sound, before the people examine into its cause. Let us bear all their evils, rather than endanger the liberty of the press.

EVENING XXI.

ON IMITATING A MODEL FOR THE CONDUCT OF LIFE.

MANY of the rules of rhetoricians contribute little to the improvement of the orator, and serve only to display the professor's subtility. But the advice, which they give on *the subject of imitation*, is truly valuable, as it conduces immediately to facilitate practice. They instruct their scholars, after the preparatory learning is acquired, to chuse a model of style, according to which they may shape their own; and not only the best writers and orators, but also the best painters, sculptors, and architects, have found that the easiest and most infallible mode of acquiring, an *habitual ease* in the practice of their arts, is to *follow the footsteps of some excellent predecessor.*

The art of life may derive advantage from rules intended only to facilitate the acquisition or practice of *those humbler arts*, which administer to pleasure, to pride, or to convenience. Let him who wishes to live well, like him who wishes to write well, *chuse a model;* which he may imitate with a judicious and discriminating, and not with a blind and servile, imitation.

A caution is necessary, lest the imitation recommended should become an odious species of affected resemblance, lest it should be so close as to destroy all originality, and lest it should degenerate to an apish mimicry.* Such an imitation must be contemptible. Seneca gives a good idea of the sort of resemblance to be sought, when he says, "the imitator of a style should endeavor to be like the original, not with the same exactness as a picture is like the person represented, but as a child resembles the features of its parent." *Similem esse te volo, quomodo filium, non quomodo imaginem.* I would have you *like*, as a son; not as a statue.

The first care is to select a proper person for a pattern,

* Simia quam similis, turpissima bestia, nobis! *Ennius.*

How like the ape, that filthiest beast, to man!

and then to discriminate between the qualities in his character which are suited to our genius, situation, rank in life, and profession, and those which, however admirable in him, would be ill-placed and ridiculous in us. Without this attention, we shall fall into the error of those whom an illustrious pattern leads into an imitation of its faults together with its beauties; we shall be affected, and lose our native character, without gaining in its place, an adscititious one of equal value.

A judicious man will naturally select some person for imitation in the same profession or employment, of similar views, and of eminence in the particular walk of life, into which himself has entered. Common sense directs to such a choice. A clergyman, for instance, will imitate a clergyman; a lawyer, a lawyer; a physician, a physician; and so in all other departments of life.

The character, which forms the model, may be either living or dead. There are many lives of men in all professions written with accuracy, and with a minute detail of particular circumstances. Such models as these may be often better known, and more easily imitated, than living characters, especially by young men, who cannot be much acquainted with the world, at least with eminent persons, in a degree sufficient to know all the requisite circumstances concerning them.

I will descend to particulars. Suppose the young man in orders, and that he fixes upon some eminent character, by which to regulate his private life and his parochial conduct. Suppose that person to be Bishop Wilson, or Dr. Hammond, or Dr. Isaac Watts, or any others of those many exemplary christians *whose bodies are buried in peace, but whose names live for evermore.**

In every situation of life which appears parallel to theirs, he will ask himself how they would have acted, and he will find an answer by observing how they really did act. Two or three such models will furnish precedents which, with a little adaption to modern times, will afford a directory for conduct, under all emergences. Great judgment is certainly necessary even here; and I have already said, that a blind imitation of any model whatever is not to be approved.

Some have recommended not only the imitation of a

* Ecclesiasticus.

person of excellent character, but the habit of supposing him *always present*, seeing and hearing us on all occasions. We may thus make him our privy counsellor, ask ourselves what he would say on such a point, what advice he would give, and whether we should be ashamed to act as our inclination prompts us in his real presence. Thus he may become the guide of our lives, and the regulator of our behavior.

What I have said of a clergyman's chusing a model may be applied to all other professions, and indeed to all occupations, from the king to the mechanic. A good model once chosen will lead them in the journey of life as a hand-post directs the traveller over a wide waste or forest, or as the lamp from the beacon guides the mariner on the ocean. They must still use their own discernment, and exert their own efforts, or they may lose their way, even in full view of Eddystone light-house.

Civil or general history has always been extolled as the great teacher of wisdom. But its lessons are chiefly political, and kings and statesmen are principally concerned in them. *Biography* is the species of history best adapted to teach wisdom in private life. There are many lives of English worthies, which cannot be attentively read by an ingenuous young man, without exciting an ardor of virtue.

But living models may be also very advantageously selected by the aspirant after excellence. The danger is lest the choice should fall on a wrong character. Splendor of rank, riches, honors, station, are too apt to recommend patterns which exhibit only a vicious exemplar whitened and gilded by the hand of fashion. Envy and prejudice are also prone to add deformity to character really beautiful. So that the choice of living examples is more difficult than that of the departed, whose fame is fixed by death.

But, so long as a good model is chosen, there is little doubt but that the means of arriving at excellence will be facilitated, whether the choice fall on the living, or on those who are out of the reach of envy.

The precept of Quintilian in the art of rhetoric must be observed in life. At first, and for a long time, only *the best* writers, and such as will not mislead him who im-

plicitly confides in them, must be selected for imitation.* But let not the imitation even of the best authors or the best men become a plagiarism either in writing or in life. There is a noble *originality*, the characteristic of genius and the parent of all excellence.

EVENING XXII.

ON DR. JOHNSON'S PRAYERS, WITH A REMARK ON HIS STYLE.

THE greater part of those writers, who have lately arrived at any very distinguished degree of fame, have favored the cause of infidelity. It is therefore the more pleasing to the friend of revelation and of mankind, to observe one of the most popular authors of our own country, and one of the ablest men that ever existed, zealously religious. Every one has heard that Dr. Johnson was devout; but I believe, few entertained an adequate idea of his warmth and scrupulous regularity in the offices of devotion, till the publication of his Prayers and Meditations.

They exhibit the writer in a light in which he has seldom appeared to his readers. He usually puts on a garb of dignity and command. His Rambler is written in the style of authority. His prefaces to the Poets are dictatorial. The reader is easily induced to believe that pride is a striking feature in his character. But he no sooner opens the book of Prayer and Meditations, than he sees him in a state of true humility. No affectation in the style. No words of unusual occurrence. Every expression is such as is well adapted to a frail mortal, however improved by art or favored by nature, when he approaches the mercy-seat of the Almighty.

The reader is thus in some degree gratified, by observing a man, who had always appeared to him as a superior mortal, and exempt from human infirmities, feeling and acknowledging with all humility, the common weaknesses of all human creatures.

* *Diu non nisi optimus quisque, et qui credentem, sibi minime fallax legendus est.*

It would be the partiality of prejudice to affirm, that the volume which I am now considering is free from all marks of superstition. To be uneasy because one has, through mistake, drunk a spoonful of milk in a cup of tea on a fast day, argues a mind not entirely under the regulation of right reason. To pray for the dead is, I think, at least venial; but I am apprehensive that it will subject the devotee to the charge of superstition among the strict and severe in doctrinal religion.

Upon the whole, though there are many apparent weaknesses in the volume, which render it a cause of wonder, debate, and offence among many, yet it does honor to the writer of it, as a proof of remarkable piety. And with respect to weaknesses, alas! what is man but a complication of them? And indeed, who shall presume to determine decisively that the eccentricities of this book are weaknesses? Many of those who censure them as such, are probably far less capable of judging than Johnson, to whom they certainly did not appear in that light.

If he was sincere, and there is every reason to believe it, the most scrupulous particulars in the performance of his religious duties deserve a name far more honorable than that of acts of superstition. Man is a most wretched being unassisted by the protection of divine favor; how can it then be wondered that he is ready to attend to the minutest circumstance which, in the hour of distress, appears likely to secure it?

Before we condemn Johnson, let us examine our own conduct, and consider whether the confidence in which many of us live, and our neglect of religion, is not a *weakness* more deplorable than any thing in what is called the superstition of this pious man.

While I am speaking of Johnson, I cannot refrain from adding an observation on his style. It always appeared to me, and I believe is now generally thought, that he had selected Sir Thomas Brown as his model of style in the composition of the Rambler.

I select a few phrases from the VULGAR ERRORS of Brown in confirmation of my opinion.

"Intellectual acquisition is but reminiscential evocation."

"We hope it will not be unconsidered that we find no constant manuduction in this labyrinth."

"For not attaining the deuteroscopy, they are fain to omit the superconsequences, coherences, figures, or tropologies, and are not sometime persuaded by fire beyond their literalities."

"Their individual imperfections being great, they are moreover enlarged by their aggregation."

"A faraginious concurrence of all conditions."

"Being divided from truth themselves, they are yet further removed by advenient deception."

"Deluding their apprehension with ariolation."

These pasages I have selected, not because they are the most striking, but because they first occurred. A thousand instances of similarity might be produced, if the whole volume were searched, and if the limits of my paper would admit them.

Though Brown is an excellent writer, yet it must be allowed that he is pedantic; and that he preferred polysyllabic expressions derived from the language of ancient Rome, to his venacular vocabulary, even in instances, where it was equally elegant and significant. Had he sought the fountains of antiquity only when those of his own times were dry, he would have deserved esteem for enriching the English language, and he might have been justly held up as an example for imitation; but he appears to use singular and magnificent words from ostentatious motives; and what, after all, does the use of them prove? That he was acquainted with the Latin and Greek languages, and that he was a learned etymologist. Sensible readers are not persuaded of another's general learning, or solid wisdom, by the pomp of exotic language.

But, notwithstanding this censure, Brown must be acknowledged to have contributed much to the *copiâ verborum*, by introducing words which in his own age were uncouth, but which are now become elegant and familiar. Johnson, considered as a lexicographer and improver of the English language, did right to select an author for imitation, who presented him with a model for coining new words. Perhaps he was led to study Brown, among others, in order to qualify himself for the compilation of his lexicon, and in studying him, for this purpose, caught his style; *but, after all,* it is certain that his moral wri-

ing would have been more extended, and consequently done more service, had he chosen a style more simple, and less obscured to vulgar readers, by polysyllabic words of Latin and Greek etymology.

EVENING XXIII.

ON LONG PRAYERS, AND ON THE DEVOTIONS OF BISHOP ANDREWS.

"GIVE me," said an ancient, "whatever may be good for me, though I should neglect to pray for it; and deny me whatever may be hurtful, though I should ignorantly make it the object of my supplications."

This may be called a laconic prayer. It has always been much admired. The perfect resignation to the Divine Will which it implies, renders it a model for the imitation of Christian piety.

Our Saviour himself seems to have disapproved of long prayers; and the invaluable prayer which he has condescended to dictate to erring mortals, is remarkable for its beautiful brevity. It might have been reasonably supposed, that the pious composers of prayers would have been desirous of imitating their great Master, in the conciseness of their petitionary compositions. But diffusion and repetition have been one of their most conspicuous blemishes. There is no doubt but that the practice which prevails among some respectable sects, of filling up a long portion of time in their public service, with extemporary prayer, has contributed greatly to increase the length of prayers, beyond the limits both of reason, and of sincere and attentive devotion.

The human mind is so formed as not to be able to retain any sentiment during a long time, in a great degree of fervor. But prayer without fervor is, I fear, an unacceptable service. And this is the reason why brevity in prayer is expressly approved by Him, to whom prayer is to be offered, and who consequently must know what is most agreeable to himself, and what sort of service is the *most* expressive of man's sincerity.

The greater part of the English liturgy is very justly

admired, as furnishing a fine example of supplicatory composition. The collects are remarkably excellent both for conciseness and fervor of expression, But it may be doubted, whether the whole of the service, comprehending three parts, intended at first to be separately used, is not longer than can be attended to devoutly even by the best disposed. The composition of most of the prayers is so well adapted to human wants and infirmities, that it might perhaps supersede the necessity of any other prayers, were it not found that the frequency of their use diminishes considerably the warmth and seriousness which otherwise they are calculated to inspire.

Books of prayers composed for private devotion are therefore very useful; and they are certainly not to be examined with great severity of criticism. But there is a little volume, entitled, Devotions of Bishop Andrews, translated from the Greek by Dean Stanhope, which lately attracted my particular attention, as my expectations were raised to an uncommon height by the following passage in the Preface:

"The heart, already enlightened and inflamed with piety and charity, will here find something exactly suitable to its inward motions, and the *most significant and beautiful words* wherein to utter its holy desires, and those gracious sentiments, which, without this help, would perhaps break forth *with less accuracy both of method and expression*. . . . . But the less perfect Christian, who has not yet made so much progress in the school of piety as the former, may reap still greater benefit from this work. It will tend to improve him in *knowledge and practice*. . . . . Indeed what less can be expected, when a book of this nature is composed of materials taken out of the Holy Scriptures, and very ancient liturgies, which bear the names of St. James, St. Basil, and St. Chrysostom, collected and put together by the most judicious workmen in this way; such as were the persons mentioned in the title-page, Dr. Andrews, once Bishop of Winchester, and Dr. Stanhope, late Dean of Canterbury."

After reading these and other passages in the Preface, which *are equally strong in* the praises of this little manual, *it will not be thought* extraordinary, that I took up *the book with great avidity*. I admired the pious strain of

some of it; but I could not help thinking that the
ble parts of it are disgraced by some passages almos
culous. I transcribe the following from the close
ACT OF FAITH FOR FRIDAY.

"O, dearest Saviour, impart to me thy whole
and let every part and act of thine have its saving in
over me.

"Sanctify me by thy spirit; feed and strength
by thy body; ransom me by thy blood; *wash me*
water; heal me by thy stripes, *refresh me with thy*
hide me in thy wounds."

I take the liberty of asking any candid reader,
ther such petitions are the natural effusions of sincer
votion; whether they are not rather of a trifling
whimsical turn; and whether they do not open
for the scorner's *Let us pray with the spirit, but*
pray with the understanding also.

I know it will be said, that while a form of
gives no offence to the simple and well-meaning de
for whom it was chiefly designed, it is a matter of
moment whether it please or displease the fastidious
and the captious wit. But to this I must reply, th
certainly of importance, not to furnish in any rel
composition, real occasion either for censure or de
and I might add, that it appears to be an affront
Majesty of heaven, to offer up a petition to God in a
and manner, in which we should be ashamed to a
an earthly potentate. A trifling, a quibbling, a n
sical prayer can never be the production of a mind
ed with a devotion at once rational and sincere.

I presume not to censure the editor, whom I co
as one of the best ornaments of our church. Th
mishes of this little book came not from him, I venti
affirm, but from Dean Stanhope, from Bishop And
or from some older writer. I have no copy of the ori
and cannot therefore discover whether the above pra
faithfully translated from it. But I think it cannot
ceed from Dr. Horne, whose judgment and be
style in the expression of devotional feelings, I hav
ever admired.

The language of a prayer should be natural and
from the heart, yet at the same time restrained and
and by good sense, otherwise it must degenerate to

the dotard, or the madness of the enthusiast. Dr.
deserves great praise for the simplicity and energy
of his prayers. Nothing of his pompous style,
words, or formal periods, is to be observed in
His good understanding suggested to him the im-
y of all affectation, when he laid aside all preten-
wisdom, and with an humility, which must al-
ecome the greatest of mortals, approached the
f the Almighty.
all that taste and criticism can suggest, it is cer-
t uprightness of intention and fervent piety, are
beauties of supplicatory writings. He to whom
is addressed, considers not the form of words,
structure of periods; but the faith, the sincerity,
ity of the poor petitioner. If the heart be right,
s of the understanding and of the lips will pass
d. Yet it is decent and reasonable to take care,
g to the best of our knowledge, not to offer up
in which there is any known defect unworthy a
furnished by the Creator with those intellectual
which surely can never be more honorably ex-
in in the service of Him who gave them.
se not to run rashly into prayer," says Howell,
ut a trembling precedent meditation; and if any
ghts intervene and grow upon me, I check my-
recommence; and this is incident to long prayers,
e more subject to man's weakness and the devil's

EVENING XXIV.

ADING TRIFLING UNINSTRUCTIVE BOOKS, CALLED SUMMER READING.

Belli libelli, lepidi, novi libelli. *Ignoramus.*

t,
I came to this water-drinking place to relax my-
lf from the fatigues of a profession which requires
plication *and confinement*, I am resolved to make
the methods which an ingenious and polite place
ted for the valuable purpose of killing time. Ac-

customed to reading as I have always been, I cannot omit books, while I seek the means of amusement; but I am forbidden by my physician to read any thing but what is called summer reading, and therefore I am a frequent lounger at the circulating library. By the way, I beg leave to give you a hint, that if you do not contrive to make your Winter Evenings, summer reading, they will not be much noticed in the repository of knowledge, where I am now writing you this letter.

As I often sit and read in the library, I have an opportunity of hearing what books are in the most request; and I am frequently not a little diverted with observing the great eagerness with which tomes, totally unknown to me, who have made books the study of my life, are demanded of the librarian. The first question on entering the shop I found to be universally—Have you any thing new? I should have supposed that the publications of the last year would have deserved this epithet; but I found by observation that scarcely any thing is esteemed new, but what is just advertised, and almost wet from the press. Curiosity seems to be the great stimulus of the subscribers; idle curiosity, as I may call it, since it seems to seek its own gratification independently of all desire of increasing the store of knowledge, improving the taste or confirming the principles.

I have smiled at hearing a lady admire the delicacy of sentiment which the author of some novel, which she had just been reading, must possess; though I knew it to be the production of some poor hireling, destitute of learning and taste, knowledge of life and manners, and furnished with a few ideas he had by reading the novels of a few preceding years. He had inserted in the title-page, By a Lady; and various conjectures were often hazarded, in my hearing, concerning the authoress. Some hinted that they were acquainted with her, and that it was a lady of quality. Others knew it to be written by an acquaintance of their own; while all agreed in asserting, it must be by a lady, the sentiments were so characteristically delicate and refined. You may conjecture how much I was disposed to laugh when I was informed that it was the production of a hackney scribbler in Black Boy Alley.

I confess I had been much more conversant in a college *library than in* a circulating one, and could not therefore

but be astonished at the number of volumes which the students would devour. The *Helluo Librorum*, or Glutton of Books, was a character well known at the university, and mentioned by the ancients; but I believe their idea of him is far exceeded by many a fair subscriber at the circulating library. I have known a lady read twenty volumes in a week during two or three months successively. To be sure they were not bulky tomes, such as those of which it was predicated that a great book was a great evil. The print in the pages of most of them, to speak in the mechanical style of mensuration, were three inches by one and a half, and the blank paper exceeded the printed in quantity by at least one moiety on a moderate computation.

Now, Sir, I am not one of those who mean austerely to censure this mode of reading; for I am of opinion that it is often very innocent, and sometimes not without considerable advantage. There are certainly many novels which, though little known in the literary world, are not without merit, and of a very virtuous tendency. Most of them tend to recommend benevolence and liberality; for it is the fashion of the age to affect those qualities; and I really think, as conversation is usually conducted, scarcely so many opportunities occur of imbibing benevolent and virtuous sentiments from it, as from the decent books of a circulating library: I say decent, for I am sorry to observe, that in the multitude of new books which the librarians are obliged to purchase, some have a tendency to diffuse every kind of evil which can mislead the understanding and corrupt the heart.

The danger of indiscriminately reading whatever has the recommendation of novelty, induced me to take up my pen and write to you, hoping that I might suggest a caution on the subject to some of your fair readers, who, I am sure, have recourse to a circulating library solely to improve and amuse themselves while under the hair-dresser's operation.

They would, I think, do right to enquire the character of every book they read, before they take it into their dressing-room, and to shew the same caution in the choice of their circulating-library books, as they would in the selection of their company. Your's &c.

SENEX.

EVENING XXV.

ON BEING DISGUSTED WITH BASHFULNESS IN BOYS.

TO prevent the evil which arises from attempting things beyond their strength, nature seems to have given many animals that instinctive knowledge of their want of ability which produces caution. The bird, while it is callow, never leaves the nest, unless by an accidental fall; and when its plumage is grown to a considerable degree of perfection, it takes but short flights at a time, and seems unwilling to lose sight of its parent and nurse. It is not till the wings have acquired strength and agility, that it leaves the branches or the ground, and dares to soar undauntedly in the fields of air, unmindful of the nest and the fostering feathers, which lately supplied it with warmth and protection.

Something of a similar diffidence, arising from conscious immaturity of power, appears to me to take place in the human mind at the puerile age; and I cannot help thinking it truly amiable; yet it is stigmatized with the odious name of shyness and sheepishness, and many parents appear more solicitous to divest their children of it, than to furnish them with any grace, virtue, or accomplishment. By dint of great pains, they often succeed, in thus forcing the rose-bud to expand its immature leaves; but I fear they are greatly mistaken in their management, and that their uneasiness at seeing their children diffident is totally misplaced.

If indeed the diffidence, which they lament, were likely to continue through life, I agree with them, that it would be a great misfortune. It would prevent exertion, in a thousand instances, where exertion would be rewarded with profit and honor; and it would occasion the child much causeless anxiety. But in general, there is no danger of its continuance beyond the period of immaturity, at which it is certainly natural, and rather pleasing and graceful, in the eyes of sensible observers. I contend that it is caused by conscious inability arising from youth, and that it will of itself give place to a proper confidence,

as soon as it feels a consciousness of power matured and confirmed by age.

I believe I may go farther, and assert, that this unfashionable diffidence, which many fathers and mothers labor to remove, even in the tender period of early infancy, is favorable to growth in mental vigor and virtuous principles. All who are to excel in future must devote a previous time to discipline. He who would one day speak must first listen. And, to return to the bird, to which I have already alluded, it is well known to the students in ornithology, or at least to those admirers of the feathered race called bird-fanciers, that the finest singing-birds listen when young to the old ones, and even when they have learned their notes, venture only to *record*, as those gentlemen express it, that is, to sing in a soft low tone, almost as if they were ashamed of being heard. I have often heard the blackbird, who has afterwards made the woods resound with his melody, trying his skill or *recording*, under the covert of a hawthorn, in so low a warbling, as scarcely to be distinguished amid the concert of the grove.

The mind collects images of things, and forms opinions during the immature state, at which it scarcely ventures to employ the tongue in utterance. And when a store of ideas is at last accumulated, it feels a spontaneous confidence founded on conscious merit; and shines, at a mature age, with a lustre which it would never have displayed, if, instead of collecting ideas, it had been indulging its own pride in uttering vivacious nonsense.

I am of opinion that men of the greatest genius, of fine imagination and sensibility, were of necessity timid and diffident in the puerile period; and I wish parents not to infer, from the diffidence and silence of their children, that they are naturally stupid. There is indeed an appearance of diffidence which arises from real dulness; but there is a real diffidence caused by excess of sensibility, and it is a favorable presage of all that is lovely and excellent in human nature. Parents will therefore endeavor to discriminate duly, before they decide on the abilities of their children, from the appearance of timidity or shyness in company, and their diffidence in saying or doing any thing which their age has not afforded them opportunities to learn. They will be cautious of remov-

ing this veil which nature furnishes for defect, as she guards the blossom before it has acquired strength sufficient to admit of full expansion. If the bud, which would naturally expand in April or May, were rudely opened in March, what fruit could justly be expected in August and September?

Nothing is more common than to observe parents introducing a boy of eight or nine years old into company, to balls, and to assemblies, with the professed intention of wearing off that sheepishness (for such is the ignominious term) which he may have unfortunately contracted at school or in the nursery. Neither is he suffered to be silent, lest his friends should attribute silence to dulness. Contrary to his inclination, the poor boy must force himself to be pert and loquacious to all whom he encounters, or he will be ridiculed and reproached for stupidity. Unfortunate mistake! If he should become a proficient at this early age, in the school of audacity, to what a height of impudence will he arrive in manhood? of impudence unsupported by knowledge, or any real merit which can justify even confidence. Too many in this age, are trained in this mistaken plan, which is the reason why we commonly meet with forward young men, who overpower all around them with noise, who are incapable of rational conversation, who are avoided by all sensible persons, and who associate with the only characters, who can enjoy their company, gamesters, horse-jockies, phæton-drivers, drunkards and debauchees. Their mistaken parents succeeded too well in divesting them at an early age, of that diffidence which was natural, which was becoming, and which would have been the means of preserving their innocence, their characters, their health, their fortune, every thing by which life is honorably embellished, and death rendered less formidable.

EVENING XXVI.

ON THE EFFECT OF ANCIENT AND MODERN MUSIC.

IF a general ardor of a whole people in the pursuit of excellence be likely to obtain it in its highest degree, *it might* reasonably be expected that the English nation

should at this time be singularly distinguished for a skill in music. The musical mania, if it may be so called, has diffused itself from the court to the cottage, from the orchestra of royal theatres, to the rustics in the gallery of a country church. As Juvenal said of the Greeks of his time who migrated to Rome for interest, that it was a nation of comedians, we may say of the English, that they are a nation of musicians.

But has this general ardor produced that stupendous, unexampled, excellence which might have been expected? I allow the effect only to be an adequate criterion of that excellence. And what is the usual effect of a concert? It is in general an admiration of the performers, of the skill in execution, the volubility of fingers, the quickness of the eye, and the delicacy of the ear. But how are the passions affected? Look round the room and see the index of the passions, the eyes and the countenances of the audience. Smiles and complacent looks abound; but these are no indications of those sudden transitions of violent emotion, which music is said to have charms sufficiently to excite. A few may sometimes appear *affected*; but there is reason to suspect that it is too often an *affectation*, not the most laudable or amiable.

Among the ancients, the effects of music are said to have been almost miraculous. The celebrated Ode of Dryden has made every one acquainted with the magic power of Timotheus over the emotions of the human heart. And all, who have read any thing of ancient history, must have remarked the wonderful effects attributed to the musical instrument in the hand of a master.

Among a hundred other stories, which evince the power of music, I recollect the following: Pythagoras was once likely to be troubled at his lecture, by a company of young men, inflamed with wine, and petulant with the natural insolence of youthful levity. The philosopher wished to repress their turbulence; but forbore to address them in the language of philosophy, which they would either not have attended to, or have treated with derision. He said nothing; but ordered the musician to play a grave majestic tune, of the Doric stile. The effect was powerful and instantaneous. The young men were brought to their sober senses, were ashamed of their wanton behavior, and with one accord tore off the chaplets of

flowers, with which they had decorated their temples, in the hour of convivial gaiety. They listened to the philosopher. Their hearts were opened to instruction by music, and the powerful impression being well-timed, produced in them a permanent reformation.

How desirable it is to revive the music of Pythagoras! How concise a method of philosophizing to the purpose! What sermon or moral lecture would have produced a similar effect so suddenly?

But nothing of this kind was ever produced by the most successful efforts of modern music. Let us suppose a case somewhat similar to the preceding. Let us imagine a number of intoxicated rakes entering the theatre with a professed intention to cause a riot. Such a case has often been real. The music in the orchestra has done all that it could do to soothe the growing rage; but it was as impotent and contemptible as a pistol against a battery. It would be a fine thing for the proprietors, if a tune or two could save the benches, and the fiddlers preclude the carpenters. But Timotheus and the Doric strains are no more; yet surely in so general a study of music it might be expected that something of their perfection might be revived.

"That the music of the ancients," says Jeremy Collier, "could command farther than the modern, is past dispute. Whether they were masters of a greater compass of notes, or knew the secret of varying them more artificially; whether they *adjusted the intervals of silence more exactly*, had their hands or their voices further improved, or their instruments better contrived; whether they had a deeper insight into the philosophy of nature, or understood the laws of the union of the soul and body more thoroughly; and thence were enabled to touch the passions, strengthen the sense, or prepare the medium with greater advantage; whether they excelled us in all, or in how many of these ways, is not so clear; however, this is certain, that our improvements in this kind are little better than *ale-house crowds* (fiddles) with respect to theirs."

I must leave it to the Burneys and the Bateses of the age to determine to what cause the little effect of music on the passions is to be ascribed. In reviving and performing the works of Handel, they have done much to-

wards vindicating the declining honors of impassioned music. But still the commanding effect recorded by antiquity seems to remain a great desideratum.

I profess to consider the subject not as a musician, but as a moralist; in which character, I cannot help wishing to find that sort of music cultivated, which possesses an empire over the heart, and which, like oil poured on the troubled waves of the sea, can soothe the tumultuous passions to tranquillity. I wish to see the musician, who not only pleases my ear by his sounds, and delights my eye by his legerdemain, but who, in the words of Horace, *irritat mulcet*, enrages or stills my emotions at his discretion. I wish to hear musical Shakspeares and Miltons touch the lyre, or inspire the tube.

I should have ventured to conclude, from the universal application to music, from the perfection of the instruments, and the ingenuity of the compositions, that the art is at this time arrived at its ultimate excellence. It is not easy to conceive, that much more can be done; and I am very doubtful whether the ancients had equal excellence in theory or in execution. Yet, after all, when I consider the effect, I am compelled, however reluctantly, to deplore the great inferiority of the modern to ancient music. As I am no artist on the pipe or on the lyre, I can only suspect that the defect arises from the want of simplicity. It may not, after all, be unjust to surmise that the accounts handed down of the stupendous effects of music among the Greeks are exaggerated by *Græcia mendax*, or that disposition of ancient Greece to fiction, which gave rise to the nonsense of mythology.

EVENING XXVII.

ON THE EFFECT OF CARICATURAS EXHIBITED AT THE WINDOWS OF PRINT-SELLERS.

Animum pictura pascis.....Virg.

POISON may be converted into medicine; and ridicule, which, when directed against morality and religion, operates like a pestilence, may be used to expose vice and folly with peculiar efficacy.

The mode of ridiculing by prints has some advantages over that by writing and argument. Its effect is instantaneous; and they who cannot read, or have not sense enough to comprehend, a refined piece of raillery, are able to see a good caricatura, and to receive a powerful impression from it.

The lower classes in London, it may be supposed, have not time, inclination, or ability, to read much, but their minds are filled with ideas, not only by the multitude of occurrences, but also by the prints which are obtruded on their notice, in the windows of shops conspicuously situated in the most frequented streets. And I believe, they often receive impressions either favorable, or unfavorable, to their honesty and happiness, as they loiter at a window with a burden on their backs, and gape unmindful of their toil, at the comical productions of the ingenious designer. Every benevolent man must wish, that whatever representations have a tendency to corrupt and mislead them, might be kept out of sight ; and only such exhibited in the window, as may divert them innocently, or convey some useful instruction. I say nothing on the subject of indecent prints at present, as every one must acknowledge that they infuse a poison, the bad effects of which none can trace to their ultimate malignity.

But it appears to me, that the exhibition of the first magistrate, and of great statesmen, in caricatura, must contribute to diminish or destroy that reverence, which is always due to legal authority, and established rank, and which is confessedly conducive to the most valuable ends of human society. The virulence of party hesitates not to represent royalty itself in situations, which must render it contemptible in the eyes of kennel-rakers, shoeblackers, chimney sweepers, and beggars. Their contempt, it will be said, is of little consequence, and yet these personages made their power felt in the memorable month of June 1780; and riot and disorder are greatly promoted by emancipating them from all reverence for their superiors; and how can they respect the subordinate dignities, who are taught to defile the fountain of honor and to malign the author of all civil dignity? Besides, the effect is by no means confined to their order. The contempt must have been diffused through the higher and middle ranks, before it descended to them ; and there is great rea-

son to believe, that the turbulent opposition to authority which has disgraced the present reign, originated and grew from the contempt thrown on the higher orders by various methods, and, among others, by ludicrous representation on the copper-plate.

Our laws have been careful of the reputation of the subject, and libels cannot be published without the peril of a prosecution. But the framers of the laws did not perhaps foresee, that the engraver, as well as the writer, might be guilty of defamation, and would deserve to be restrained by the terrors, and the penalties of legal control. Our love of liberty is so ardent, that, like other violent passions, it overshoots its mark, and loses the object at which it aims. Else a practice which infringes on private liberty, more than any act of any king in this country, could not be suffered to prevail without restraint, and with triumphant impunity. What can savor more of the oppression of wanton tyranny than not to permit a man to be ugly in his person without exhibiting him as a spectacle and a laughing-stock, in the streets of the great city? Is a man to be put to shame, to stand, as it were in the pillory, a mark for scorn to point her finger at, because nature has given him a long nose, a protuberant belly, or an ill-shapen leg?

Indeed, of all satire, none is so ungenerous, as that which reflects on personal deformity, one of the principal of the τα ουκ φ' ημι, *the things which are not in our own power*, and for which we are often no more accountable than for bad weather, pestilential blasts, or inundations. But the inventors of caricatures are not contented with representing the deformity as it really exists, but glory in their ability to add to distortion, and render an irregularity, or defect, which would pass unnoticed, eminently and ridiculously conspicuous.

A man of sense and fortitude, it will be said, may despise a contempt, which arises from circumstances, for which he cannot be blamed; but is the very person, who urges this, possessed of such sense, and such fortitude, as to despise any kind of ridicule which will adhere to him, as a stigma of reproach? With all our pretensions to wisdom, there are none but those who have lost their sensibility, who can patiently bear to become objects of public derision, either for singularities of the mind or the body.

The practice of exhibiting all persons of consequence, in caricatura, may therefore not only injure the public, by diminishing the respect due to official authority, but cruelly invade the peace of families, and distress the bosom of an unoffending individual. It deserves, then, to be reprobated, by all good and thinking men, who are unwilling to sacrifice, for the sake of a laugh, public welfare, and private tranquillity.

Ridicule has been always supposed peculiarly injurious, as it is confessedly indecent, in the affairs of religion. I believe wisdom will always be justified by her children, and that Christianity is founded on a rock so firmly, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; but yet, I am convinced, that to treat its ministers or ordinances with contempt, may do it great injury among the lower orders and weak minds, who will be thus led to despise what cannot be despised with safety. There are few subjects which the designers of ludicrous prints take more delight in, than to represent clergymen in a laughable situation and figure. I mention one instance of a print, which would hardly deserve notice, if it had not become popular among the vulgar. The print of the Vicar and Moses is often hung up on the walls of the farm-house where the clergyman of the parish used to be reverenced as a saint, and consequently was able to do great good; but is it to be supposed that this reverence will not be diminished, among the children at least, who from their infancy are accustomed to behold the parson an object of derision, a glutton, and a drunkard?

Any mode of affording innocent diversion, of exciting mirth without giving pain, is not only allowable, but desirable, in a world abounding with evil, and in a state of existence, which is, of necessity, burdened with care. But all human things require limitations.

The genius of a Hogarth is certainly worthy of admiration, as an excellence; and of honor, as having been made a vehicle of great good to society. Hogarth finely moralized his pencil. His imitators have not reached his excellence in art, they have scarcely aimed at his morality, but they have abused their petty talents in lowering every thing great and venerable.

Some late designers in caricatura have merit; and if they would confine their ridicule to vice and villainy, they

would add to the praise which is due to them, as men of skill and genius, that which is superior, the praise of benevolence, and the virtue of doing good in their generation.

Many may be disposed to consider ludicrous prints as trifles; but apparent trifles are acknowledged by all wise men to lead to serious evils, and they ought to be carefully suppressed, while they continue trifles, and while the suppression is therefore practicable. Every good member of society must acknowledge the value of decency, good order, public tranquillity, and private security; and every sensible and observing man may observe, that all these may be destroyed by the libels of the pencil. No one knows whose turn it may be to suffer next, and it is therefore the interest of all, even of the perpetrators of the mischief themselves, to discourage the prevalence of wanton assassination.

EVENING XXVIII.

ON MODERN HEROISM.

IT is said by the learned, that the age of heroism is no more; but I beg leave to dissent from their opinion. An age, I suppose, derives that appellation from its abundance of heroes. If so, then the present age may be styled heroic. I cannot say that we have many Alexanders, Cæsars, and Charles's; but, if what the world call spirit, fire, and genius, constitute a hero, we certainly abound in heroes.

The name, indeed, *hero*, is not usually adopted, because it has become a little unfashionable. But the character exists at present under the title of a DASHING Fellow.

The etymology of the word *dashing* is doubtful; but among other explanations of its meaning, our lexicographer says it signifies, "to fly off in *flashes* with a loud noise." In this sense, it is very applicable to the character of the true dashing fellow.

The object of this kind of hero, is fame, or rather distinction. He scorns inglorious ease, though accompanied

with health, plenty, and the esteem of his acquaintance. Health, plenty and esteem, what are ye to public renown? Think of the bliss of being admired at a horse-race, pointed at in a theatre, and daily celebrated in the paragraphs of a *dashing* newspaper.

The dashing fellow, as great genius usually shews strong indications of it at the earliest age, begins his career of glory at the public school, to which he is sent by his parents, to rub off the shyness incident to natural modesty and the immaturity of youth. At school, he scorns to pore over musty Greek and Latin, but gloriously aims at being pre-eminent in every mischievous frolic, scorning the control of his master, and taking the lead in every attempt to revolt against authority, and in support of liberty, "that goddess heavenly bright." He spends his money, with which he is plentifully furnished by his parents on purpose to *distinguish* him, not in boyish gratifications, but in hiring horses, keeping pointers, and terriers, giving dinners, and in every noble enterprise of vice and wantonness, of which his age is capable.

On leaving school, whence he has deserved the honor of expulsion a thousand times, though the grovelling spirit of the master would not confer it, he aspires at the splendid distinctions of the turf, the gaming-table, and the whip; not to mention his illustrious emulation of the Grand Seignior in the establishment of his seraglio.

If he is born to a large estate, he disdains to wait, like meaner spirits, for the death of those on whom it depends, or till he comes to age, but munificently bestows premiums on the despised Israelites, to supply his present unconfined generosity. And though he should borrow and spend more than he will be ever able to repay, he is above stooping to the narrow thoughts of pecuniary concerns. With an heroic confidence, he trusts for future supplies to time, to fortune, to the friendly dice, to any thing, and to nothing.

Thus furnished with money, the sinews of heroism as well as war, he sallies forth in quest of adventures, in a high car, ycleped a phæton, drawn by six steeds, not bigger than ponies, but beautiful enough to attract all eyes, at every inn, and through every town he passes, in his rapid progress from horse-race to horse-race. The importance of his objects renders an unparalleled expedition

sometimes so necessary, that he condescends to hire hack-horses, an inglorious measure, if some lustre were not to be reflected on it, by killing three or four of them in their harnesses, that he may reach the race-ground at the moment of starting from the goal. Fame blows her trumpet through all the country immediately, and the newspapers re-echo the report on the morrow, that young Dashwell travelled all night to reach Newmarket, and killed six horses on the road: glorious atchievment, worthy to be recorded in the temple of fame, in letters of gold, on pillars of brass!

Arrived at the race-ground, he distinguishes himself more than any of the paltry fellows at the Olympian and Pythian games, so celebrated by the Theban. He clothes himself in a leathern cap, a short waistcoat, long buck-skin small-clothes, and the neatest boots and spurs!—mounts the racer, and rides the race. If he dislocates his shoulder, or breaks his collar-bone, the little pain is despised, for the ample compensation of being generally talked of and renowned, as the best gentleman-jockey in the three kingdoms.

But distinctions like this are not sufficient for his great soul. He must fight a duel, before his claim to complete heroism, or *dashism*, can be universally allowed. Nothing more easy than to find an occasion. His best friend will furnish him with one over the next bottle of burgundy. He gives the lie direct; a challenge ensues; the parties meet; one fires without taking aim; the other, into the air; the seconds interfere; the duel is over, the account is drawn up, signed by the seconds, inserted in the morning papers, and the glory of both parties established on a basis never to be shaken. Dashwell's business is done, his name is up; he has taken a degree in glory; he was a dashing fellow before; he is now a d—d dashing fellow.

But to the ambitious, Alps on Alps are continually rising. He wishes to be renowned for his spirit at the gaming-table. He stakes the whole reversion of his estate, and loses it with a cool intrepidity that might shame the Cato's and Regulus's of antiquity.

The bottle remains for consolation; and great are his atchievments under the banners of Bacchus. But his health declines. His hands shake. His legs totter. He

wants a wife as a nurse. He goes, in pursuit of one, into the regions of old Drury, and marries an Amazon as common as a hackney-coach. She becomes a termagant. His dashing spirit, unused to control, and above submission to the loss of fortune, health, and tranquillity, finishes the career of glory with a pistol.

But dashing fellows are not confined to high life. There are multitudes of gentlemen volunteers in this honorable service among the lower orders. Swindlers, forgers, coiners, and highwaymen, are all dashing fellows. But England, like Athens in this respect, is ungrateful to her great men. As the Athenians banished their distinguished worthies by the ostracism, so the English send their heroes into exile by the rigor of their laws. Botany Bay is colonized by dashing fellows; and multitudes are now riding in phætons, galloping fiery steeds, and living in style, as it is called, on purpose to qualify themselves, on some future day, for this honorable dismission from their native country.

Even the literary community is not without its share of dashing fellows. They chiefly appear in the form of political pamphleteers, paragraph writers, hand-bill authors, and *philosophers of a liberal way of thinking*. One writes a pamphlet full of treason and abuse of his Majesty, that attracts notice for a day, and immediately thinks himself a second Solon. Another scribbles a paltry ode, or poem, in which he asperses, with filth and venom, the King, and all other virtuous characters, and immediately rises in his own estimation to the rank of a Swift or a Butler. A third scribbles quaint paragraphs that would disgrace a chambermaid, so destitute are they of common sense and composition, and then deems himself the wittiest and merriest wight in all Christendom. A fourth, being a philosopher, aims a deadly stroke at Christianity, and rises in his own eyes a polemical Goliah, though the first stone in the sling of a true man, with no higher pretensions than to common sense and common honesty brings him to the ground. All these are dashing fellows, great in their own opinion, and in the opinion of the little circle connected by similar principles and practices; but great as they appear, the community would feel itself relieved by their honorable banishment to Botany Bay, as the stomach is refreshed after the evacuation of an emetic.

These dashing characters may be compared to a dashing torrent, all noise, all foam, all violence for a moment, and then spent and exhausted for ever; or to a comet, attracting all eyes for a short time, but cheering no system, and perhaps endangering all; or to a kettle-drum, which owes its power of making a noise to brass and emptiness; or to some vile liquors, hot in the mouth, but without a body.

A dashing fellow, indeed, however he may admire himself, or be gazed at by the public, displays so many symptoms of insanity, that, if his real friends were to put him on a strait waistcoat, feed him on bread and water, or take out a statute of lunacy against him, they might be justified by the circumstances, and would probably prevent much injury to himself and to the public.

It is greatly to be wished, that young men who are actuated by the perverse ambition of being *distinguished* for a conduct and qualities which are mischievous and irrational in the highest degree, would consider that *distinction* is then only honor, when it is founded on esteem; and that to be talked of, and stared at for extravagance and folly, are but poor compensations for the loss of honor, fortune, health, peace, and life.

True heroism is best displayed by acting a RATIONAL, manly, uniform part; and by shewing sense to despise the applause, and spirit to defy the sneers, of fashionable folly, however it may be countenanced by the example of the rich and the noble, by the favor of the great, and the patronage of the powerful. It is meanness and cowardice to yield reason and right to ridicule. It is a spirit worthy of a man, to proceed in the path of rectitude, under the guidance of principle, careless of undeserved censure, and unsolicitous for the admiration of an unthinking multitude. Contrasted with this, the false fire of the *dashing* fellow is like the blaze of a handful of straw compared to the undiminished radiance of the vestal flame.

EVENING XXIX.

ON THE ART WHICH HAS LATELY BEEN HONORED WITH THE NAME OF PUGILISM.

HUMANE and considerate men cannot observe, without concern, the prevalence of a taste for any diversion which contributes to the degradation of human nature. That the taste for boxing, unhappily revived in the present age, has such a tendency, cannot be doubted by those who duly reflect on the principle from which it proceeds, and the consequences it tends to produce.

It originates in a ferocious disposition, and a CONTEMPTUOUS OPINION OF MAN. No gentle and benevolent mind can derive amusement and delight from a spectacle, which must cause pain and danger to those who exhibit it; and none but those who consider man as an animal, not at all superior to the beasts, can endeavor to engage two fellow-creatures in a combat, which, in cool blood, may cause the loss of limbs, and the loss of life. Can he have any idea of the soul's immortality; of man's being made a little lower than the angels; and of the superintendance of the deity; who views with joy, approaching to extasy, two poor wretches endeavoring to destroy each other for hire; who makes it the principal business of his life to see such sights, and to promote their frequent repetition; who derives gain from them as well as pleasure, and pursues them with the same ardor and constancy, as others prosecute the study of an honorable profession? Such a taste must proceed from a gross ignorance of better and more manly pleasures, and from a savage heart, restrained only by human laws, from the actual perpetration of the worst cruelty.

The consequences of this taste, to individuals and to society, are truly deplorable. When the combat is announced, all the vilest members of the community are eager to partake in an amusement congenial to their corrupted natures. The scene of action is crowded with an assemblage of wretches, who conduct, under their triumphant banners, riot, intemperance, violence; who defy *all civil order*, all decency, every thing for which laws

were enacted, and society established. A successful example is given of disobedience to law, which paves the way to anarchy, revolt and rebellion. An insult is offered to the civil magistracy, which those who encourage it may hereafter rue, when they feel the consequent depredations on their property, their persons, and their peace.

The lower orders are taught to believe, what indeed they are at all times ready to suppose, that there is an excellence, which the greatest men in the nation may admire, in the exercise of a mere brute force, in defeating their neighbor by violence, without equity; and in striking a terror into the minds of the good and orderly, who are not endowed with muscular vigor and superior size. Government was instituted to protect the weak against the strong; but the boxing rage contributes to increase the tendency of the strong to injure and oppress the weak.

It has been the scope of all who have labored in the civilization of mankind, to soften the native ferocity of the human heart, to control its propensity to violence and cruelty, to infuse a spirit of mutual benevolence, and teach a willingness to leave the redress of private wrongs to public justice. But the boxing mania does all that can be done in the present enlightened times, to bring back man to his original barbarity, to ignorance, to selfishness, to injustice, to contempt of laws, to infringement of property, to every base and destructive action and inclination which the laws of God and man have uniformly prohibited.

But strongly as the lovers of law and order express themselves against this savage taste, there are not wanting men pretending to political wisdom, who advance arguments in its favor. Let what they have urged be fairly considered.

It is said, that the encouragement of boxing promotes a martial and a manly spirit, among those whom the nation may one day call forth to supply her armies and her navies.

I believe it is not agreed that those who excel in muscular strength, or in the skill necessary to exert it in single combat, are superior to others in courage or conduct during the heat of action with a public enemy. A boxer, or a lover of boxing, is not a better soldier or sailor than the hardy husbandman or manufacturer. Superior strength

or bulk is not required to pull a trigger, fire a cannon, or to climb up a rope. A fist, though tutored by the best *rules* of *science*,

> .....Qualia vincant
> Pythagoran Anytique reum.....*Hor.*

avails little against a sword, a musket, or a bayonet, in the hands of a dwarf, or a man who never heard of the name or the art of a pugilist. And, as to the manliness of spirit which boxing, and the love of it, are said to promote, is it not rather a proof of meanness, than manliness, to fight a man in cool blood, for *lucre*, and to afford amusement to those who pay for admission to the spectacle? Persons who did this, were always numbered among the meanest of mankind, and certainly have no right to be considered of nobler dispositions, than tumblers, rope-dancers, riders of three horses, and fire-eaters, all whose pranks are attended with danger, voluntarily incurred for the sake of lucre.

To bear blows without regarding the pain, to inflict blows without feeling reluctance or compassion, argues, indeed, an insensibility of body and mind; but insensibility can never be deemed a perfection; can never produce that sort of courage which derives force from conduct, that sort of manliness which owes its value to its origin in reason. An attempt to reduce men merely to machines, in the hands of their superiors, is of so base and ungenerous a nature, that it ought to be reprobated by all who have any real manliness in their character.

The plough and the anvil, the axe and the hammer, will always supply a race of men with sinews strong enough to undergo all the hardships and labor of war; and the native sentiments of such a race, in a land of liberty, will always produce a spirit sufficiently manly, without encouraging any practices which are, of necessity, cruel and savage. Cruelty, of every kind and degree, has in it something inherently base and dastardly, and never can be compatible with real heroism. It may make a bully and an assassin, but neither a warrior nor a patriot.

It is also said, that boxing is the natural mode of terminating those disputes which will always arise in the collisions of human intercourse. I grant that in the savage

state it may appear to be the natural mode of deciding quarrels; but England has long been in a state of high civilization; and they who, by any mode, endeavor to bring it back again to what is called the state of nature, must give up all pretensions to philosophy and wisdom, and deserve to be marked as the enemies, not only of their country, but of their species. I have heard it even denied that the fist is the natural instrument of attack and defence, since the hand is evidently formed to hold a weapon with greater effect, and since all nations, in the most uncultivated state, use weapons, from the *patoo patoo* of the South Sea Islanders, to the broad sword of the British soldier. But this I only mention as matter of curious speculation; for the fist being less offensive than the sword, would be preferred by the philanthropist.

It is further contended, that, allowing the boxers themselves to be a mean and pitiable race, their engagements furnish a manly and improving spectacle to gentlemen who have leisure to seek their own amusement from every thing that can afford it. That it is not a manly spectacle to behold two fellow-creatures injuring each other as much as they can, by brute force, is, I think, evident from what has been already said; and that it is not an improving spectacle, is equally clear, if it be true that the heart, by becoming familiar with scenes of suffering and violence, becomes obdurate at the sight; forgets its best quality, compassion; and feels less reluctance at inflicting pain when under the influence of irascible affections; and that this is true, none will deny, who knew the force of habit, and the proneness of the mind to evil.

I believe that those who endeavor to find political reasons to justify the prevalence of a taste for boxing, are scarcely in earnest, and mean little more than to palliate with sophistry, what reason cannot approve. The taste arises among the lower orders, from natural brutality, or a wish to get money by entertaining their superiors in rank, who have disgracefully professed themselves *amateurs* of the practice. In the higher ranks, it arises from thoughtlessness, wantonness, and a gross ignorance of better modes of spending time, filling the chasms of science, polite arts, and philosophy.

But whatever it originates in, I shall not hesitate to assert, that it is unworthy of a gentleman, unworthy of a

good citizen, unworthy of a christian, and unworthy of a man.

I have said little of it in a religious view; though much might be said, for christianity must condemn it entirely, without reserve, and without exception. But it is to be feared, that the fraternity of boxers and their followers will not lend a willing ear to the still small voice of religious conscience. Indeed I do not flatter myself with the idea of making converts of them by any thing which can be addressed to them in writing; for it is extremely probable, that those who are sunk so deeply in degeneracy, as to delight in this irrational and disgraceful amusement, take no delight in reading any thing but a sporting calendar, a book of farriery, or a treatise on the *science*, as as they call, by way of eminence, the theory and sublime art of bruising the flesh, breaking the bones, and *sewing* up the eyes of their fellow-creatures.

But there is one great teacher who will be heard; and whose arrival may probably be accelerated by reducing the *science*, which they admire, to practice. His instructions will cause them to see their conduct in a new light, and to despise their choice of spending the short space of life allotted to man in a behavior more brutal than that of the beasts who perish, but who never exhibit the bloody effects of rage, except when they are impelled by real passion, in defence of their young, or the necessities of hunger.

EVENING XXX.

ON ASSOCIATING WITH EQUALS FOR THE TRUE PLEASURE OF FRIENDSHIP.

THE experience of the world has long pronounced those marriages the happiest, in which the contracting parties are of a condition nearly equal; so that, when the first ardors of love are abated by time, neither can assume a superiority, or think it a condescension, to have acceded to the nuptial alliance.

This observation, which is just in matrimony, is no less true in friendship; of which, similar inclinations and

similar aversions are said to constitute the only firm foundation. But to like and dislike the same or similar things, is not usual in persons widely separated from each other by birth, rank, and fortune. A great disparity in all these circumstances, causes things to appear in different colors, opens diversified prospects in life, and renders the same objects, to one desirable, and to the other, indifferent or odious.

Wherever, therefore, what the world, in common language, terms friendships, are made between inferiors and superiors, plebians and patricians, the connection is not properly what the ancients understood by friendship, but a coalition formed by solicitation on one side, and condescension on the other, between an expecting dependant, and a powerful patron. An alliance of this kind, though not abounding in the pleasures of true friendship, may be very useful to both parties, it may serve the necessities or convenience of the superior, and contribute to the interest, preferment, indulgence, and luxury of the inferior; and is therefore very ardently and consistently pursued by those to whom these are the sole or principal objects in the establishment of an amicable intercourse.

But there are some who pursue such connections exclusively of all others; and not so much for the sake of advancing their interest, as gratifying their pride and vanity. They scorn to admit their equals in birth, rank, fortune, and education, to that familiarity which true friendship requires. They hunt for men adorned with titles, or furnished with property, not in the least regarding the recommendation of personal worth. When admitted to the tables and company of such men, they become flatterers and humble servants, but cannot be considered as friends, in the just and honorable sense of that appellation. They are not in a state of liberty. They dare not express their real sentiments, lest they should give offence, and be excluded from the table, to sit at which, they consider as their chief good, their highest honor. If they possess the privilege of being allowed to leave a card at a great man's door, or can say among those whom they consider as their inferiors, that, the other day, they dined with their friend, Lord Slender, and must absolutely sup to-night with Lady Rout, where they expect to shake hands with an old friend, whom they have not seen some time, the Duke of

Dolittle; they are supremely happy; they have not lived in vain; heaven has at last rewarded them amply for the pains they took in studying the *open countenance*, and *thoughts close*; the graces of the person, and the various modes of similation and dissimulation.

After all, this lord, lady, and duke, only laugh at the poor fellow's folly, admitting him now and then to fill a chair, because he plays cards pretty well, sings a good song, blows the German flute, talks nonsense fluently, or romps with the children.

He, poor mortal! thinks his fortune made. No place becomes vacant, but he imagines his great friends may procure it for him. He knows they mean to do him some service by surprise, while they scarcely ever think about him, and would not give six-pence to save him from a prison. As to the little power they possess in procuring places, it has been all engaged for years to come, in securing the interest of two or three boroughs; and their good friend, who is so proud of their friendship, stands no more chance of preferment from them, than the pious and learned curate of their parishes, with forty pounds a year, and a wife and ten children.

What advantage, then, has he derived from his splendid connections? Good dinners, good wine, sometimes good company, much amusement, and some improvement in the airs and manners of a man of fashion. What have these advantages cost him? The loss of the real pleasure and benefits he would have derived from his own family connections, from several of his school-fellows, and his neighbors; every one of whom he has affronted, or deserted, since he first aspired at friendship with people in high life. He meets them either with a supercilious air, and a strut of self-consequence, or with that prodigious affability, and outrageous condescension, which proud people often display while they affect humility; and with which they insult and hurt, while they compliment and carress their dependant. His old friends, thus despised, retaliate upon him richly, and have long stigmatized the would-be-great man, with the mock title of a Count.

Pleasure he may have enjoyed from such connections; pleasure arising from the gratification of pride and vanity; but not the pleasure of cordial friendship. This is only to be found among persons whose condition in life is nearly

equal; I say nearly equal, for a mathematical equality can never be found between any two persons, neither is it required for the establishment and enjoyment of friendship. A very considerable latitude must always be allowed to the word *equals*, when applied to friends; but not that latitude, which separates them at so great a distance, as renders condescension on one part, and submission on the other, necessary to form the unnatural coalition. In the physical attraction of cohesion, two drops containing a quantity of matter nearly equal, will mutually move towards each other; but if one drop is much larger, it will absorb the smaller, and appropriate it entirely. Wood of any kind may be joined to wood, by the common cement of the mechanic; but wood will not coalesce with gold and diamonds, without particular contrivance; and a slight accident will usually dissever the union.

The genuine pleasures of conversation are much diminished by restraint, awe, obsequiousness, and a fear of hurting one's interest in maintaining the free sentiments of conviction. Reason feels itself, in such circumstances, confined by trammels, which, while they confine the motions, gall by their pressure. Freedom is lost; and it is an old observation, that slavery contributes to degeneracy of nature as well as to misery. And I think it probable, that voluntary slavery is more degrading than compelled, since it argues a natural propensity to that meanness, which coercion is said in time to produce.

But, notwithstanding all that may be said, there are persons who make it the first objects of their lives to seek the friendship of persons greatly their superiors; and who avoid familiarity with their equals, with as much solicitude as they would shun a pestilence. They cultivate the external graces, which in them are unbecoming; they engage in expensive pursuits, which their fortunes cannot support; they waste their time, which might be spent in honorable and lucrative employments, solely that they may dangle after persons in high life, who often despise their meanness, while, for their own accommodation or amusement, they admit their visits, and accept their attentions. Many a one has spent his life in pursuit of glittering phantoms, and lived to repent, in old age, poverty, and desertion, that he did not cultivate those friends, whom Providence had pointed out for his choice, by

their proximity of situation, and similitude of manners, rank, and objects in life. Had he chosen his friends in his own spheere, he might have lived in a state of competency, and with respect; but as he chose to soar above them, with wings too feeble to support his flight, he fell unpitied by those whom he deserted, and contemned by those whom he vainly attempted to reach. A toad eater, a led captain, an humble companion, are appellations which no man, who has a sense of real honor, would chuse to possess; but these are the best names bestowed upon men who spend their lives in courting the great by all arts, but those of truth and virtue.

Every man should respect himself as a man. The conscious dignity which, in the lowest station, preserves the mind from unmanly meanness, is not the pride against which philosophy protests, and christian meekness revolts. All respect, indeed, should be paid to superiors in civil rank, which the love of order dictates, which local customs, or national institutions require; which decorum, and even fashion, when she is not exorbitant, may direct: but no man who has a just idea of what it is to be a man, will sacrifice his liberty, his freedom of thinking and speaking, all the frank joys of social intercourse, to a fellow-creature exalted above him, not by personal worth, but by adventitious and hereditary honor; and one who probably never intends to reward the sacrifice, by any thing but a nod and a smile. For such a sacrifice, indeed, no man, however elevated, can make an adequate remuneration.

There is certainly no reason to avoid, but many to seek, the notice and patronage of the *worthy great*, by worthy conduct; but if the aspirant is a gentleman, by which I mean a man of real honor, duly accomplished by education, he must be admitted to their friendship on terms of perfect equality, as a gentleman; and the distinction of the nobleman must be absorbed in the cordiality of the friend. Otherwise the connection, however glossed by specious names, is like that of the old feudal times, between the lord and his vassal.

What has been said on the necessity of a nearly equal condition, to the existence of true friendship, must be extended to connections with those too much below, as well as those too much above us. But pride is usually a sufficient guard against excessive condescension, in the selec-

tion of cordial friends; and it is, indeed, experimentally certain, that low connections are usually the destruction of all the improvements of education, and the refined polish of higher life. But let it be remembered, that when *low* is synonymous with *vulgar*, there are many persons very low, who yet are high in rank, and affluent in fortune.

It seems to be no improper conclusion, that, if preferment and promotion are our objects in forming connections, we ought to seek them rationally and by worthy conduct, from superiors; if the enjoyment of social delight and hearty friendship, from our equals; if opportunities of doing good most effectually, from our inferiors; but that no object whatever in forming connections, can justify the sacrifice of freedom, reason, and conscience, which constitute the true dignity of human nature.

EVENING XXXI.

ON THE BENEFICIAL EFFECTS OF THE MARINE SOCIETY.

SIR,

YOU desired me to write down the few particulars of my life, that you might be able to communicate them to a member of the Marine Society. I comply with your request most readily; but, at the same time, must intreat you to put my narrative into better language than I am able to use, since I never was scholar enough to indite a letter fit for the inspection of any body, but one of my shipmates.

My parents, during the winter, lived in a garret in Kent-street, and followed the employment of raking kennels, picking up rags and bones, and sifting cinders in a neighboring brickfield. In the summer, they took a journey into Kent, and procured a precarious livelihood by hay-making, harvest work of all kinds, and picking of hops. They journeyed in a decent style, for folks in their condition, having an ass, a pair of panniers, and a tin kettle.

The first event of any great importance to me, which I can remember, was a violent dispute between my father and mother, while they were making tea under a hedge,

by the side of the Kent-road. My mother it seems, usually kept the money, and as the hop-picking was just ended, the store was pretty plentiful. My father insisted on taking out of the leathern-purse enough to supply him with a dram of gin after tea. My mother peremptorily refused, as she had formed a design of buying me a pair of breeches, as soon as we should reach London. Words were high. My father swore terribly; and after obtaining the purse, by intimidating my mother, with an uplifted hedge stake, walked away, solemnly vowing that he would go on ship-board, and never see us more. My mother, putting the panniers on the ass, and me into one of them, set off in immediate pursuit; but my father as we supposed, turned out of the road, and we were never able to find him. We pursued our journey, and arrived at our old quarters in Kent-street, at midnight. It was too late to be admitted; and we remained cold and hungry in the street all night. In the morning we expected admission to our lodgings; but the pay being exacted previously to entrance, and it being discovered that we had lost all our money, the ass, panniers, and kettle, were seized for an old debt, and we ourselves turned from the door to seek our fortune.

Beggary was now our only resource. As I had neither shirt, breeches, stockings, nor shoes, and indeed no covering whatever but an old ragged petticoat of my mother's, thrown over my shoulders, I moved the compassion of many passengers, and earned, upon the average, four pence a day. This served to keep us from starving, but could not furnish us with a lodging at night. But there are comforts in all situations. The neighboring brick-hill furnished us with a warm lodging at no expence. Hither we used to retire, as soon as it was dark, and often slept more soundly than the rich on their beds of down. One morning however, to my great grief and surprise, I found my mother dead by my side. She had drunk a little too much gin on the preceding evening, and her health being impaired by grief and want, she fell asleep to wake no more. I knew not what to do. Hunger impelled me to return to the street and beg. I sallied forth, with an intention to return again in the evening, and see whether any care had been taken of the corpse; but as I was rambling about I met a boy of similar appearance

with myself, and we soon entered into familiar conversation. I told him my wants. He could not relieve them, for his own distresses were equally great; but he undertook to conduct me to the quays, near the Custom-house, where, he said, I might live most luxuriously on sugar, by watching my opportunities to pick and scrape the hogsheads, as soon as they were landed. I listened with delight; and we ran with eagerness to the place where he said he had lived pleasantly for some months. I found his representation true. Sugar, treacle, and raisins, were our delicious viands. They were often mixed with dirt, for we chiefly picked them from the ground; but hunger is not nice; and though they were filthy, they were sweet. The only misfortune was, that we seldom could procure enough to satisfy the demands of nature; and we were nearly starved to death in the midst of our luscious repasts.

One day, as I was busy in scraping the inside of an empty hogshead, I was accosted by a fat, ruddy, old woman, decently dressed, in the following words: "Child," said she, "you seem to be of an active disposition. You might earn a better livelihood than this, if you were inclined to be industrious. If you will come along with me, I will clothe you, and set you up in a business that may make your fortune; and as an earnest of my favor, take this roll and cheese." I seized the food, with the voraciousness of a hungry lion, and devoured it before I made the least reply. She repeated her question, whether I was willing to go home with her? I scarcely answered for joy; but leaping out of the hogshead, with the utmost agility, placed myself at due distance behind her, to follow wherever she might please to lead. She walked on through various turnings and windings, till she came to a little house in a blind alley, which I have since learned is called Cut-throat Corner.

As soon as I had eaten and drunk sufficiently, she caused me to be washed perfectly clean, and my hair to be cut off almost as close as if I had been shaved. She then clothed me from head to foot, in old and dirty garments, but tolerably tight and warm. You may easily suppose that I was delighted with this change of fortune. I was put to bed on a flock bed, which appeared to me most de-

licately soft ; but I could not sleep for thinking happiness I enjoyed.

The next morning, my patroness told me that s chosen me from many others, whom she had seen quays ; because she had observed my great activit and particularly admired the nimbleness of my fi that she thought me perfectly well qualified, by and genius, for the employment she intended m that a few lessons would complete me in the pu that my business was to ease careless gentlemen and in crowds, of their watches and pocket-handke and that I must begin with the pocket-handkerch partment. Upon this she shewed me her pocke made me take out her handkerchief a hundred time could do it with a kind of legerdemain, without he ceiving it. I was no unapt scholar ; and on the fi of my noviciate, arrived at a considerable degree c terity.

" Well," said she, " I will accompany you thi ing to the play-house door, and continue in the borhood till the time of business is expected. bring home one handkerchief, I shall continue you service ; but remember, if you have no success, cause you to be taken up as a pick-pocket, and prison. Go,"* said she, " and prosper. Impr your new art ; thus may you arrive at riches. R ber that all depends upon your merit."

I arrived at the scene of action, and, with gu and trembling began to think of reducing my the practice. Often I attempted to *dive*, and as often drew my trembling fingers. At last I saw an elder tleman, very handsomely dressed in a bag-wig, l under one arm, and an umbrella in the other hand. said I, is the time. Now must I succeed in bear the prize, or a prison, and poverty, and hunger, my lot. This thought urged me to the attempt. I ed my hand into his pocket. I pulled the handk but it was pinned to the bottom. The sudden jerk the gentleman's attention. He seized me by the and dragged me, without making any disturbance, quiet street in the neighborhood.

* I, pede fausto.....
Macte nova virtute, puer. *Virg.*

"My lad," said he, "I see you are very young, and your countenance, as far as I can judge by this light, looks ingenuous and honest. I pity you. Perhaps you may have found a friend in me. Tell me by what circumstances you were led to this life of villainy?"

I fell down upon my knees, implored his pardon, and told him, in as few words as possible, the heads of my history.

Upon my finishing it I thought I saw him wipe a drop from his eyes with his white handkerchief; but he turned aside lest I should discover it.

Assuming a stern manner, which I could see was the effect of his judgment acting against his nature, he told me, that though my crime deserved the severe punishment of the law, yet he would endeavor to reform, rather than torment me, if I were good enough, and sensible enough, to suffer him to snatch me from destruction.

He added, "As you have no friends, or parents, to distress by your absence, you shall go home with me to-night; and to-morrow, I will take such measures with you as I shall see proper." So saying, he called a coach, and making me enter it with him, he ordered it to drive to his house.

Not to tire you with an enumeration of particulars, he recommended me as an object of charity to the Marine Society; and while he related my misfortunes, kindly concealed my crime.

I was cleansed, clothed, instructed, and sent to sea. I enjoyed a happiness which no language can describe, in obtaining the means of earning an honest livelihood. I felt a sentiment of religious gratitude to the Author of my being, and the preserver of my life. I wished to read the scriptures, and was fortunate to find a ship-mate who bestowed great pains upon me, in a long voyage, and taught me, eager as I was to learn, both to read and write. My regularity and diligence gained the esteem of the officers; and whatever favor could be shewn me, without blameable partiality, I received. I had been early trained in the school of adversity, and was therefore the better prepared for the school of virtue. I distinguished myself in several engagements in the last war, and had the honor to lose my leg in the service. When the first pain and [illegible] was over, I felt great consolation in

finding myself enriched by a pretty share of the prize-money. With this I took a good accustomed shop in the chandlery line. It succeeded to my wish. I have been married some years to a most industrious woman. I have three boys, all of whom are sent to school, and can read and write well, though the eldest is not nine years old. I am respected by my neighbors; I am in a state of plenty; I am happy.

And now, Sir, give me leave to request you to make my acknowledgments to the leading men of that admirable society, to which I am indebted for my rescue from all the wretchedness of extreme poverty, united with temptations to extreme wickedness; and for opportunities of becoming an useful member of the community, instead of a bane and a curse. O, Sir! none but those who have actually felt the beneficial effects of this institution, can conceive of them as they deserve. I have felt them; I therefore can form an adequate idea of them; but I want language for expression. Let me conclude my long epistle with a hope, that all who have the superfluities of life, will bestow some of them on the support of a society which patronizes the outcasts of the human race, the naked, the hungry, the vagabond *infant*, who cannot help himself, and has none to help him; too loathsome with filth, to be borne by delicacy; too obscure and concealed, to be seen by the eye of grandeur.

Since my writing the above, I have heard of the Rotunda in St. George's-fields. God prosper it. Pray present it with the enclosed *guinea*.

EVENING XXXII.

ON THE INFLUENCE OF THE PROFESSIONS ON THE MANNERS AND THE CHARACTER OF THE PROFESSORS.

THAT the daily actions and professional employments in which men are conversant, produce an effect on their manners, sentiments, and dispositions, is an opinion which none will be inclined to controvert. Experience evinces that this effect is sometimes bene-

and sometimes injurious. The immediate causes, and the nature of the influence of *profession on character*, afford matter of curious and important speculation.

In considering the subject, I shall take a view of the professions of divinity, law, physic, and of the military life. The subject is rather invidious: but in pursuit of truth, the odium resulting from its discovery, must be borne with patience.

It is certain that no assertions can be made on great numbers of men, which will continue to be true of every individual. If they are true in general the exceptions will not diminish their importance.

The clergy of England, considered as a body, constitute a most respectable class; not to be excelled, in all that improves and reflects honor, on human nature, by any other body of the same number in the community. Liberally educated, attentive to character, conversant in acts of Christian benevolence, employed in acquiring and communicating knowledge of the most important kind, they shine as lights in the world, diffusing, like the great luminary in nature, a radiance to guide, and a warmth to foster the erring multitude. Their office, considered speculatively, is most honorable and beneficent; and without flattery, it may be affirmed, that the clergy of England have acted up to it in practice, with a comparative uniformity of wisdom and virtue, which bears ample testimony to the truth of their religion, and refutes the infidel more effectually than all the folios of polemic disputation.

Thus they appear in their official or professional capacity. In familiar life, and the common intercourse of vicinity, they are social, pleasant, elegant, improving, and charitable. They cultivate every thing that can embellish and refine, together with all that can enlighten, soften, civilize, and purify the manners of society.

The important business of education has devolved upon them almost entirely, by the tacit consent even of the irreligious; a consent arising from conviction, that their morals and attainments usually render them the fittest persons to conduct it, with the greatest skill and fidelity. The princes and nobles of the land derive from their instructions, the wisdom and the eloquence necessary to govern nations; and the union of those brilliant and solid

accomplishments, which add fresh lustre, and intrinsic weight, to crowns and coronets, stars and ribbons. The lowest of the people find from the exertions of the clergy, an education suited to their humble sphere, leading to useful qualifications, inspiring religious principles, and all the humble virtues of industry. The clergy have confessedly handed down the torch of science from generation to generation, which, without their care, might have been long ago extinguished.

They are, indeed, philosophers dispersed over the nation; philosophers, but with all the pride of philosophy melted down by the charity and humility of the christian; philosophers, but without the useless seclusion of mere contemplative life; philosophers, but such as bring down wisdom from heights inaccessible to the vulgar, and cause her to walk familiarly in the common road, among all the sons of men, without any exclusive distinction of riches and honors, loving and serving them all as children of the same Parent, as inheritors of the same glory.

But is there no shade in the picture? Is there no dross in the ore? I believe there is a little imperfection in the whole order, as the common infirmity of human nature allows; but that little is usually magnified by the tongues of those who, unfortunately for themselves, endeavor to wound religion through the sides of her ministers. It is easy to account for the malignant representations of a Shaftesbury and a Hume. The cause of their hatred of the clergy, must destroy its effect on every mind, which unites candor with good sense.

But it seems reasonable to suppose, that some less laudable habits and dispositions may be caused by a few untoward circumstances attending their profession. It certainly affords them much leisure; and leisure is a temptation to indolence; and indolence is the parent of luxury, gluttony, and intemperance. It leads to a taste for trifles, to a love of the various games of chance, of field sports, and all the ingenious contrivances for killing time. Happy, if it is confined to pastimes that are inoffensive, and negatively good; since the experience of the world has long established, as an incontestable truth, that idleness is the root of all evil. It cannot be expected, that all the individuals of a very numerous class, should possess inclination and ability for the pursuits of literature.

To such, the mere business of supplying a church cannot afford avocation enough to employ their time. As they have no taste for study or composition, they have recourse to the easy modes of supplying their pulpit, which modern contrivances amply furnish; and after expending a few pounds in this way, they have little to interrupt the studies of the card-table, and the amusements of the gun, the dog, the horse, and the bottle.

The love of money, as well as the love of pleasure, in excess, has been laid to their charge. Appearances may sometimes confirm the imputation. Their incomes are often small, and drop at once on their demise. A desire, therefore, to obtain independence in old age, or to provide for a family, leads to a parsimonious attention, which, by a hasty judgment, will be pronounced avarice. Their claims for tithes are made on those who, from their sordid dispositions, pay with reluctance, and are glad to resent a just demand, by stigmatizing him who makes it, with the epithet, covetous. The charge is often unjust; but yet it is easy to observe that frugality commonly degenerates in old age to downright and extreme avarice.

A mean submission to superiors, for the sake of emolument, is another characteristic which has been supposed to mark the profession. While men are actuated by the hope of gain, and the spur of ambition, they will take the most effectual methods of obtaining the object of their desire. And it happens unfortunately, that those who bestow preferment, are not so likely to bestow it on merit, of which they are often but incompetent judges; as on a submission to their will, and a subserviency to their purposes of pleasure, avarice, and ambition. The dog that fawns, it is remarked gets more bones and fragments from the master's table, than the surly mastiff who barks and growls, yet guards the house from the midnight depredator. Unmanly obsequiousness in this profession, may be easily accounted for; but cannot be palliated in any other way, than by pleading the infirmity of human nature.

Much has been said on the *odium theologicum*, or the bitter hatred of divines, as if they were, above all men, implacable in their resentments. This aspersion might adhere to them in times of ignorance and barbarity; but in the present times, is totally inapplicable. The opinion arose from the unhappy virulence of controversialists. But

among them also, the charge admits of extenuation or excuse. It was thrown upon them by their enemies ; and if they gave any apparent occasion for it, which I fear must be acknowledged, let it be candidly believed, that their intemperate zeal arose from their earnestness and sincerity ; honest qualities, and respectable even in a mistaken cause.

If these, or any other circumstances of the theological profession, lead to foibles or faults ; to levities or vices ; to pride or meanness ; it will be right to guard with double vigilance against an assault in the weakest place. "Let not your good be evil spoken of," is a scriptural caution. It is peculiarly necessary to avoid this evil in the church ; because not only the individuals who are censured, suffer, but the church itself, and those over whom they are appointed to watch as shepherds ; and before whom they are to walk as exemplary guides. Methodists and infidels are equally extreme to mark what is done amiss by that order which is countenanced and protected by church and state. Their severity is unchristian and irrational : but, such is the malignity of mankind, that it is found to serve their cause, by making proselytes to their opinions. And I fear, it is not a false alarm, nor a needless admonition, to say, that both these descriptions of men have increased, are increasing, and ought to be diminished. But how diminished ? Not by persecution, but by the mild, yet irresistible compulsion of sound argument, enforced by a brilliant example of christian perfection. I must retract the word *perfection*. None of us can reach it ; and woe to them who judge others, whether believers or unbelievers, clergy or laity, methodists or atheists, with excessive rigor. All men are servants of one Master, by whose judgment they shall stand or fall. Let each judge himself with severity ; but all others, with that lenity which himself must most devoutly wish for, at the tribunal of the righteous Judge.

EVENING XXXIII.

ON THE INFLUENCE OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION ON THE MANNERS.

IF great respect is paid to speculative science, to pure mathematics, to astronomy, to metaphysics, to all the effects of ingenuity which terminate in the sublime and refined pleasure of intellectual exercise; how much more justly is it due to a science which prepares itself by speculation, merely that it may descend to practice; that it may learn to assuage the agony of pain, resuscitate the languor of sickness, preserve or restore the impaired senses, render old age easy, and lengthen life? A speculative philosopher, however excellent, even a Newton and a Locke, weighed in the scales of reason, against a practising physician of skill and virtues like those of a Heberden, or a Willis, kick the beam like the gossamer that floats in the air, balanced with a wedge of bullion.

As life abounds with misery, they are to be considered as the greatest men, and the most honorable members of society, who are best able to relieve it. What avails it to miserable man (*ægris mortalibus*, as Virgil feelingly expresses it) that a new planet is discovered; or a new moon belonging to an old planet; or the doctrine of innate ideas; or liberty and necessity, confirmed or invalidated? But it concerns him beyond expression, when a remedy is pointed out for the gout, the stone, a fever; for blindness, deafness, lameness, madness; for the preservation of his life, or the lives of those, in whom his whole happiness is involved.

The profession of a physician is, therefore, worthy of high honor, and will receive it from those who form a just idea of real utility, and bestow their esteem, not on the dazzling objects of empty pretension, but on that which confers the most substantial and unequivocal benefit on the human race.

Thus noble is the profession of medicine; and the professors of it in England, have usually acted up to its dignity. Deeply learned in philosophy; well versed in polite letters; adorned with arts; graced with social accomplish-

the more to be esteemed, since they counteract the effect of their familiarity with scenes of suffering, by the control of their reason. If without feeling, they act with all the kind attention which feeling would cause, combined with the steadiness of cool judgment, which excessive feeling might shake, they are entitled to the praise, which mere animal or instinctive sensibility can never deserve.

I do not find any peculiar failing originating from the circumstances of the profession, in the character of the physician; and those which are alledged by prejudice and vulgarity, are either non entities, or such infirmities as fall to the lot of all men. If there is any thing singular in this profession, it is singular ingenuity, singular politeness, and singular beneficence. As to the empirical tribe, the disgrace of society; the reverse of every thing said in praise of the physician, will, in general, be applicable to them; and it must be the wish of all benevolent men, that the deceptions which they obtrude on afflicted poverty and ignorance, were by authority of law, cognizable by a court of sworn physicians, and punishable by a severe penalty. There are few greater abuses in a community, than that of picking the pockets of those who are already distressed by penury and disease united; and preventing them from applying where relief might be obtained, by holding out specious pretensions corroborated by false and venal testimonies. The ridicule and censure which have been unjustly thrown on the physicians, are justly due to the quack-doctors. They are, indeed, pompous, self-sufficient, affectedly solemn, venal, and unfeeling with a vengeance. If there were a tribunal at which the assumption of doctor's degrees could be investigated, it might be serviceable in detecting and exposing one mode of deceit, by which ignorant empirics impose on vulgar credulity.

Surgeons and apothecaries regularly trained and improved by experience, may certainly take a rank next to the physician. Their skill and humanity in the present age, entitle them to a more honorable place in society, than they have formerly been allowed. Men of sense are not guided in their judgment by an appellation. Surgeons and apothecaries enjoying and using the opportunities for improvement, which, in these times, are af-

The appearance of mystery, which is often blamed, is not without good effects on patients, who, from a natural propensity of human nature, are apt to venerate, and confide in most, what they least understand. Many, if they were fully to comprehend the nature of the remedies administered, would despise, and refuse to apply them. The satire and ridicule so liberally, or rather illiberally, thrown on the physician for these appearances, in the exercise of his profession, is unjust; and ought then only to be applied to him, when he assumes them in the scenes of domestic and social life.

That physicians are peculiarly venal, is, I believe, false. Few can be named who do not give much of their time and skill to the afflicted poor, to their own professions, and to the clergy, without accepting the smallest recompense. Many have been known to return great part of exorbitant fees, given by the grateful rich, endeavoring to proportion their own remuneration to the good they may have been able to do, and the attendance they have been obliged to give. But the assumption of a profession, will not alter a radical disposition of the heart. Some among the medical class, as well as in all other classes, are naturally covetous; and the meanness and harpy avarice of a few, has unjustly been suffered to fix a mark of disgrace on all. The common fee of a physician, considering the expence of his education, and that he sells no medicine, is moderate; nor can he be blamed, who accepts, under the guidance of discretion and humanity, the recompense of an employment by which himself, and perhaps a family, are to be supported.

That medical men are unfeeling, is an opinion, which arises from their coolness and dispassionate deportment in the midst of deep distress. But this command of their feelings is a prime excellence in their character. While all around them are embarrassed and debilitated by sorrow, they are called upon to act with wisdom and judgment. Were they to sink under sympathy, the patient whom they came to relieve, must be neglected, or attended to with faculties deranged, confused, and unable to prescribe with decision.

But still it must be allowed, that an habitual sight of distress, diminishes sensibility. Physicians, therefore, who act with humanity, as the greater part certainly do, are

the more to be esteemed, since they counteract the effect of their familiarity with scenes of suffering, by the control of their reason. If without feeling, they act with all the kind attention which feeling would cause, combined with the steadiness of cool judgment, which excessive feeling might shake, they are entitled to the praise, which mere animal or instinctive sensibility can never deserve.

I do not find any peculiar failing originating from the circumstances of the profession, in the character of the physician; and those which are alledged by prejudice and vulgarity, are either non entities, or such infirmities as fall to the lot of all men. If there is any thing singular in this profession, it is singular ingenuity, singular politeness, and singular beneficence. As to the empirical tribe, the disgrace of society; the reverse of every thing said in praise of the physician, will, in general, be applicable to them; and it must be the wish of all benevolent men, that the deceptions which they obtrude on afflicted poverty and ignorance, were by authority of law, cognizable by a court of sworn physicians, and punishable by a severe penalty. There are few greater abuses in a community, than that of picking the pockets of those who are already distressed by penury and disease united; and preventing them from applying where relief might be obtained, by holding out specious pretensions corroborated by false and venal testimonies. The ridicule and censure which have been unjustly thrown on the physicians, are justly due to the quack-doctors. They are, indeed, pompous, self-sufficient, affectedly solemn, venal, and unfeeling with a vengeance. If there were a tribunal at which the assumption of doctor's degrees could be investigated, it might be serviceable in detecting and exposing one mode of deceit, by which ignorant empirics impose on vulgar credulity.

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forded more plentifully than ever, become, in effect, and in the liberal sense of the term, physicians. From their extensive researches, and from their general intercourse in families, their minds are as enlightened, and their conversation as polite and agreeable, as those of any order in the community.

I cannot dismiss this part of my subject without doing justice to the university of Edinburgh, by acknowledging that much of that superior excellence which distinguishes the medical classes in all their branches, throughout Great Britain, is derived from the instruction it affords. Edinburgh, as a place of medical education, has confessedly surpassed, not only Oxford and Cambridge, but the universities of all Europe.

EVENING XXXIV.

ON THE INFLUENCE OF THE PROFESSION OF THE LAW ON THE MANNERS.

LAW, the accumulated wisdom of ages, forms a stately and massy pile, which it is impossible to contemplate without feeling a reverential respect, resembling, in some degree, religious adoration. The aggregated decisions of the wisest and best of men, augmented, retrenched, corrected by the cautious hand of experience, and at last confirmed and compacted by the slow but powerful operation of time, demand an admiration of their excellence, and an acquiescence in their wisdom, almost equal to the implicit submission paid to revelations from ON HIGH.

Those men, therefore, in society, whose office it is to preserve the law, to expound it, and to administer it, deserve, if they execute their office well, to wear the robe of distinction, and to be seated at the right hand of the prince. While they poise the scales of equity, and wield the sword of justice, let them be crowned with the wreath of civic honor.

But a truce with the flights of imaginary perfection. Law, however pure and excellent in itself, is but a dead letter, till it is called into life by the activity of man; of man, weak in his nature, corrupt in his will, and prone

to pervert the best things for the narrow purposes of selfish advantage.

Law constitutes a venal profession, in which the sublime views of equity are often obscured and lost, in the misty mazes of chicane. Cunning, as often as wisdom, assumes the office of interpretation, and, by successful subtilty, rises to high honors among men, wears the trappings, and enjoys the recompense of that wisdom which she has ingeniously aped, though she could not equal.

The great lawyers, who have reached the highest honors of appointment and nobility, began their career as advocates at the tribunal. As advocates, their study was not so much to point out the law as it really existed, as to sophisticate the letter, and misrepresent the spirit of it, in order to serve the temporary purpose of the client who paid the fee. As hired advocates, they were obliged in honor (a sort of honor which binds even highwaymen) to defend, with all their knowledge and eloquence, the cause they undertook, whether right or wrong; and thus a plausible sophistry was often of higher value, and more ardently studied, than truth, reason, law, or equity. To gain the cause was the object; not to illustrate law; not to do justice between man and man; but to gain the cause;—which was, in effect, to gain popularity, employments, riches, office, and perhaps, at last, titular distinction.

But minds thus habituated to sophistry, are in danger of suffering cunning to become their predominant quality, conspicuous in every part of life. Having found it successful in their profession, they infer its efficacy in the commerce of society, in common intercourse, and in familiar conversation. But cunning, it has long been observed, is not compatible with greatness of mind, or comprehensive wisdom; and it is remarkable, that the most successful advocates at the bar, have not usually been the best ministers of state, members of parliament, magistrates, patriots, or men.

Great cunning is, indeed, scarcely compatible with strict honesty. It tempts to the violation of it by pointing out the means and by suggesting the chances of impunity. Characters, therefore, in the law, which have been admired for ability, have often been viewed with suspicion, on the points of integrity and principle. The appearan-

ees of them have been supposed by the world to be adopted from the same cunning which has regulated every part of their conduct, and laid the foundation of riches and honors. Few famous advocates and practising lawyers, therefore, considering the great numbers in the profession, are ranked among the great benefactors of mankind. After their death, and when the interested individuals, who have been served by their cunning, have been silenced by the universal Leveller, they have been considered as little more than *artful fabricators of their own fortune.** No idea has been attached to them, in the least resembling such as are affixed to the character of the Solons, the Lycurgi, the Numæ, and the Minos's of antiquity.

It is, indeed, a standing proof of the little intrinsic value of human honors, that they have been lavished, with peculiar profusion, on a profession singularly selfish, and singularly disposed to injure the great interests of society, for the advantage of particulars. But its success in the world is easily accounted for. It makes cordial friends, by serving secular purposes; by securing victory in doubtful rivalries; by assisting men in things which they are apt to deem paramount to all, in the great contests for riches, power, and honor. The glorious uncertainty of the law renders it, in the hands of a skilful practitioner, an instrument to his avarice and ambition, in being made to bend, like a leaden rule, to the wishes and views of every bountiful employer.

But if the profession of the law has this corrupting influence on the minds of the advocates, men usually improved by a liberal education, and elevated by nobler views, how baneful must be its operation on the low practitioners! how much more so on the pettyfoggers; men, low in rank, low in principle, and low in education! But here I will observe a tender silence. I am unwilling to inflame that odium, which confounding the innocent with the guilty, has branded the whole tribe with charges of duplicity, management, artifice, and trickishness, approaching to the imputation of arrant knavery. I mean not to satirise, but to admonish. If there are peculiar circumstances in the lower parts of the profession, which tempt to a disingenuous, over-reaching, crooked conduct, let the professors be doubly guarded against them, as men,

* Fabre quisque fortunæ suæ. *Cic.*

in the first place; and in the second, as men in a profession. It is certain, that a fair character, exclusively of all ideas of the loveliness and virtue of rectitude, is the most conducive to success in the business of an attorney. And let no prospect of present gain tempt a man to hazard an imputation on his character; a loss, which the gain of dishonest practice can never compensate.

The letter of the law allows many things which are extremely hard, if not strictly unjust. Those who are obliged to act by the letter of the law, unfortunately incur a blame in such cases, which is certainly not their due. But a man of sense and humanity, who values his character and conscience, will avoid, as much as possible, such practice as leads to the doing what is rigid, under the sanction of what is lawful. The levying of distress, and all kinds of petty litigation, afford very dangerous temptations to the commission of cruelty, the suppression of truth, the propagation of scandal, and the support of plausible falshood. Men whose natural dispositions and acquired principles reprobate such things, are sometimes ensnared into them by the untoward *circumstances* of their professional employment. The world should make some allowances for a conduct, which, though far from laudable, is rendered, by the entanglements of a difficult and dangerous business, not easy to be avoided.

Unnecessary reserve and caution are observed to mark the conversation of many in this profession; a reserve and caution acquired by attending to the force of words in legal instruments, and the various meanings that are often given to little or no meaning in courts of judicature. But these frigid qualities cast a damp on the ardor of cordial familiarity, give an alarm of design, and either shut up the mouths of the company, or render the discourse stiff, formal, and insincere, from a superfluity of circumspection.

A disposition to wrangle, contradict, and controvert opinions on trifling subjects; to argue, not on points of real consequence, but about a pin's point; a captiousness, a dictatorial air, a supercilious insolence, and a perpetual attempt at wit, derived from imitating eminent counsellors at the bar, often spoil the conversation of men who, *from* their evident talents in the practice of the law, might

be expected to furnish improving topics of friendly discourse. But these are foibles little to be regarded in men, who preserve their characters in weightier matters, free from just reproach.

And notwithstanding the dangers peculiar to the business of an advocate, and the practice of an attorney, there are, doubtless, many, who overcome them all; who walk through the mazes of a wilderness, without deviating into crooked paths, without wounding themselves with the brambles, or defiling themselves with the mire.

EVENING XXXV.

ON THE INFLUENCE OF THE MILITARY PROFESSION ON THE MANNERS, WITH A GENERAL CONCLUSION ON THE SUBJECT.

NOTWITHSTANDING the historian records, with all the dignity of language, the atchievements of the warrior; the orator celebrates him in the most splendid panegyric; the poet adds new brilliancy to his character, by the colors of fancy, and the graces of diction; yet that state of war which gives opportunities for all this display of glory, cannot but appear, in the eyes of philosophy and religion, not only the calamity, but the disgrace of human nature. Neither the purposes of regal ambition, nor the pretences of political interest and national aggrandizement, nothing, but inevitable necessity and self-defence, can justify a state of war; that state, which spreads misery and desolation, and instigates poor short-sighted and short-lived fellow-creatures to cut off each other, as far as they are able, from the face of the earth, on which God placed them to be happy.

But in vain do reason and philosophy lift up their voices amidst the tumultuous din of disordered passions. War always subsisted on some part of the globe, and will probably continue, while false politics and corrupt and malignant passions predominate, and while the vices of men require a scourge.

Men in the military profession are not culpable for the existence of a state which they found established before

they were born, and which it is not in their power, if it were their inclination, to alter. Their profession has always been deemed one of the most honorable. As things are constituted, and as they have generally conducted themselves, their claim to honor may, I believe, remain undisputed. While we lament that such an order of men should have been found necessary, we must freely bestow that praise which the virtues of individuals engaged in it deserves.

Courage is, obviously, a prime requisite in this profession. It has, of course, been cultivated, encouraged, and displayed by it in high perfection. But courage, when it does not arise from animal insensibility, is connected with every generous virtue. The soldier has therefore been distinguished for openness, honor, truth, and liberality. To the solid virtues, he has also added the high polish of urbane and easy manners. His various commerce with the living world has rubbed off those asperities, and extended that narrowness, which too often adhere to the virtuous recluse. And perhaps it is difficult to exhibit human nature in a more amiable and honorable light, than it appears in the accomplished soldier; in the soldier, fully prepared for his profession by a liberal education, and finished, through the favorable circumstances of it, by all those qualities which render men generous in principle, and agreeable in conversation.

But all the professions are found to have some *circumstances* unfavorable, as well as favorable, to rectitude and propriety; some peculiar temptations which lead imperceptibly, without uncommon caution, to error, absurdity, and vice. I endeavor to point them out, not with a desire to disgrace, but to add new honors to the profession, and to render what sullies them more conspicuous, that it may be more easily avoided. He who fixes a buoy over a rock or a quicksand, does not intimate by it, that navigation is not to be followed or encouraged; but by pointing out local and partial danger, facilitates and secures the increase and success of navigation.

The profession of a soldier naturally leads to the cultivation of bodily strength, agility, and grace. But a great attention to the body, especially at an early age, may preclude that attention to the mind which is necessary to solid improvement. There is therefore danger, lest only a

superficial knowledge of letters, or even ignorance of a very disgraceful kind, should be a characteristic of a great number in the profession. But ignorance must always lower the character of a gentleman. It may also lead to a variety of follies, scarcely to be avoided by him who, possessing a great deal of leisure, knows not how to employ it in the amusements of a library, or in the conversation of intelligent society.

But exclusively of the general knowledge, which, in the present age, is necessary to all who support with consistency, the character of a gentleman, there is a great deal of professional science required to form the accomplished soldier. Many parts of mathematics, tactics, fortification, geography, and modern history, those parts more particularly which describe battles and sieges, are no less necessary to make an officer, than his commission.

The lives of great generals are well worth the attention of those who mean to arrive at a distinguished height in military excellence. The writers on the art military *(scriptores de re militari)* both ancient and modern, will also claim a considerable share of his application.

The art of drawing must be singularly useful to the soldier; forming, if he has any natural turn to it, a most pleasing amusement, and a very valuable qualification for the exercise of his profession.

The soldier who neglects all these, to attend solely to external grace and bodily exercise, must have a mind empty of every solid attainment, and open to the admission of vanity and vice. And there is great danger lest he should neglect them, arising from the uncommon temptations to gaiety and dissipation which surround his profession. Acceptable to all companies, caressed by the gay, and admired by the fair, he finds it difficult to withdraw his attention from the lively scene before him, to devote it to study and contemplation. He is in peculiar danger of falling into licentiousness and libertinism. Experience has confirmed what speculation has suggested. All the dissolute manners of idleness, habits of excessive drinking, and debauchery; habits of gaming, swearing, expence, and contracting debt, have too often disgraced a profession, which men have ever been inclined to treat with honor; and rendered a mode of life, which is at best expo-

sed to many evils and inconveniences, infinitely more uncomfortable, by pecuniary distress and bodily disease.

The naval officer must be comprehended under the military profession. The sun in his whole progress through the heavens does not behold a class of men more uniformly generous, manly and brave, than the accomplished British sailor. But the circumstances of his profession, resembling in many respects those of the land officer, lead to a disregard of prudence and sobriety, and all those unostentatious virtues of œconomy, which, in the exuberant generosity of his noble heart, he is apt to despise as narrow, spiritless, and unbecoming his character. The consequence, however, of neglecting them, must of necessity be the same in all professions, embarrassment, distress, ill health, and uneasy reflection.

I have now, according to my design, taken a cursory view of the four professions; those of divinity, of physic, of law, and of arms. I have endeavored to point out a few evils, which the CIRCUMSTANCES attending each of them have a natural tendency to produce; and this I have done, not with the malignant purpose of exposing or reviling them, but with the well-intended aim of admonishing young men of the danger, that it may be more easily avoided.

To confirm my idea that particular professions are subject to peculiar errors, arising from their *circumstances*, I shall close the subject with quoting a passage, from Dr. Powel's Discourse on the Vices incident to an Academical Life.

"There are," says he, writers of some reputation in physic, who have undertaken to explain, to what particular diseases men are exposed by each profession and employment. Whatever their success has been, their design was certainly good; and if the attempt is not too difficult, it will be useful to pursue the same plan in our moral inquiries. We frequently exhort every man to observe with care, the complexion and temper of his soul, and to apply all such remedies as may either prevent or palliate those disorders to which his natural constitution makes him subject. But every man is not able to judge of his own dispositions; and what we call nature, is more often habit. It would be well, therefore, if we could assist the diligent searcher of his heart, by shewing him what vices usually

accompany his situation and circumstances. He will more easily discover his own personal character, if he is acquainted with that of the rank or order to which he belongs.

"Very little pains have been employed by any moral writers to this purpose. They have told us, perhaps, what are the faults of youth and of age, what the dangers of riches and of poverty; but if any thing has been said concerning the characters of particular professions, it has been by the satirist, not the serious moralists."

Let me be permitted to adopt his conclusion, and apply it to my preceding observations.

"Ought we not, therefore, it may be asked, to fly from stations where our virtue and our happiness are exposed to so many dangers? Alas! whither shall we fly? What place, what scene of life can promise us security? Each condition is surrounded with different indeed, but almost equal, difficulties. Each, too, has its peculiar advantages to compensate those difficulties, and possibly none may have greater than our own. Nor are the foregoing observations to be understood so strictly, as if they never failed in any instance. Let it not be imagined that the faults incident to an order, must necessarily adhere to all the individuals who compose it. Few are so unfortunate as to be hit by every weapon which the enemy aims against them. And some, perhaps either by the natural activity and vigor of their minds, may avoid, or with the shield of reason and religion, may repel them all. If this were impossible, the inquiry in which we have been engaged would be useless. These reflections can serve no other purpose, but that, knowing to what vices our situation inclines us, we may, by continual efforts and firm resolutions, bend all our faculties towards the opposite virtues; and having extricated ourselves *from the sins which most easily beset us*, may run with patience the race that that is set before us."

EVENING XXXVI.

ON THE AMUSEMENT OF ARCHERY, AND OTHER DIVERSIONS.

AS in every opulent and peaceful country, a great part of mankind live in the world principally to take their pastime in it; it is happy when a taste prevails for such amusements as, while they add grace, health, and vigor to the body, have no tendency to enfeeble and corrupt the mind. The revival of archery has lately received the sanction of fashion; and fortunately, it is a diversion which deserves, at the same time, the approbation of reason. It is manly, without partaking of ferocity; it is pleasing, though, at the same time, most remote from the pleasures of effeminacy. It deserves encouragement, that it may counteract, on one hand, the prevalence of a pugilistic taste; and, on the other, of an enervating delight in domestic games of chance.

The amusement of tennis ought also to be encouraged, as an exercise; since it is capable of being enjoyed in the worst weather, and the worst seasons; and in England there is so much bad weather, and so long a winter, that archery can be pursued but for a short time in the whole year. Tennis, or the *pilæ ludus*, is a truly classical game; highly esteemed by the most respectable Greeks and Romans; mentioned by Homer, Herodotus, Pliny Horace; and recommended by Galen as one of the most salutary exercises. It ought not to be forgotten that the ball, the little implement which has afforded so much health and pleasure, is said to have been invented by Aganella, a beautiful young lady of Corcyra, who presented the first she ever made, with directions how to use it, the princess Nausicaa, the daughter of Alcinous. Whether it required much genius to invent it, is a disquisition into which I shall not enter, lest it should terminate in detraction from the beautiful Aganella. Her memory is filled to be a toast of the cricketers and tennis players without any such invidious inquiry.

Hawking was once as much in fashion as archery is at present. No country gentleman could well maintain *right* to that character without a hawk on his fist.

was an expensive, a dangerous, and a troublesome diversion. The sportsmen, while their eyes were fixed on the birds in the air, often found themselves plunged into a ditch or a horse-pond.

There is a pretty diversion said, in the Relations of Sir Anthony Sherlies, to have been followed by the Persian kings, which may be called *hawking in miniature.* Sparrows, instead of hawks, are *reclaimed,* as the term is, or broken in, and taught to fly after butterflies, and bring them to their masters. If our English sparrows could be rendered equally docile, which I much doubt, it would be a delightful summer amusement for the ladies in the flower-gardens, and a very useful employment for those students in natural history, who admire and collect insects of the papilionaceous tribe.

Angling seems never to have been a very fashionable amusement, though very ardently pursued by its votaries. Some degree of cruelty attending it, has contributed to bring it into disrepute. It requires a great degree of stillness, silence, patience; and a skill and discernment in times, seasons, waters, baits, weather, and many minute articles which fashionable people of pleasure are not very willing to exercise. For the consolation of anglers I will cite a passage on their art from Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy. "Plutarch," says he, "speaks against all fishing, as a filthy, base, illiberal employment, having neither wit nor perspicacity in it, nor worth the labor. But he that shall consider the variety of baits, for all seasons, and the pretty devices which our angler have invented, peculiar lines, false flies, several sleights, &c. will say that it deserves like commendation, requires as much study and perspicacity as the rest, and is to be preferred before many of them; because hawking and hunting are very laborious; much riding, and many dangers accompany them; but this is still and quiet; and *if so be* the angler catch no fish, yet he hath a wholesome walk by the brook side, pleasant shade by the sweet silver streams; he hath good air, and sweet smells of fine fresh meadow flowers; he hears the melodious harmony of birds; he sees the swans, herons, and many other fowl, with their brood, which he thinketh better than the noise of hounds, or blast of horns, *and all the sport* that they can make."

Angling certainly excites the hopes and fears of those

who pursue it earnestly, as much as any other of the sports; and therefore answers all the purposes of rural diversion: and as to the charge of cruelty, I am afraid none of the sports are more entitled to an exemption from it. Angling, however, on many accounts, is not likely to become a fashionable sport; and is justly called, in the title of the best book upon it, the Contemplative Man's Recreation. It is conducted in silence and solitude; it makes no ostentatious appearance; it seldom displays agility, grace, or strength, and therefore is not accommodated to the views of those, who seek their pleasure in the eyes of their observers.

To archery no cruelty can be objected. Nothing is killed; nothing is hunted. There is in it trial of skill which excites a pleasing emulation; and hope and fear are gently, and therefore agreeably, agitated. There is also an elegance in the instruments, and a pleasing imitation of old English manners in the dress and appearance of the bowmen. I think it probable that the nation will soon have a large army of archers, and I wish it may have no occasion for any other.

The revival of a taste for archery has revived an attention to an old book which used to sleep on the shelves, and to be disturbed by none but a few literary virtuosi; the Toxophilus of Ascham. It has of late been much read by those who hoped to improve their skill in the management of the bow and arrow, by its instructions. In this, I believe, they have been disappointed. Manual dexterity is chiefly improved by practice. Theory and written directions oftener puzzle than explain, when they are applied to arts which are most effectually advanced to perfection, by what is called a knack, or an habitual facility derived from repeated and mechanical experience.

But Ascham's book deserves the attention of the scholar, not only as a curious, but as an excellent specimen; for excellent it may be proved, if the time of its appearance is taken into consideration. Ascham formed his style on the model of the ancients. Accustomed to write Latin, he caught the rhythm of classical composition, and transferred it to his own language. He made a great effort in reaching the excellence he attained; since his own country afforded him no good models. He, who under such disadvantages, could write so good a style, must

have been possessed of extraordinary ability. But though I deem his style excellent as an imitation of the ancients, and as an early effort in English literature; yet, I am sensible, that those who have been only conversant with the polished language of later writers, will condemn it as stiff, formal, awkward, and pedantic. It has, on many occasions, a just right to these epithets. Yet, on the other hand, it is strong, forcible, nervous, and emphatic. But when I number him among the successful imitators of the ancients, I mean that he is such an imitator as that builder would be, who after seeing the marble remains of antiquity at Rome, should come home and erect structures, similar in form, with brick, or with wooden materials. Ascham's School-master is in many parts, more eloquent than his Toxophilus.

The Toxophilus of Ascham suggests an idea that the author was himself a great lover of the bow and arrow. But I think it rather doubtful, whether so severe a scholar was greatly addicted to an amusement, which, however it was honored at court, was considered in those times as too light and trifling for a scholar. I rather think poor Ascham wrote solely on this subject from the mercenary motive of attaining a pension from the eighth Henry. There are several passages in his letters which led directly to this surmise. "I wrote my Toxophilus," says he, "not so much with a design to do honor to archery, or to direct the practice of it, as to try the experiment, whether the treatise might not improve my circumstances, which are low indeed, lower than the common condition of the studious; for I found that several persons had received very great favors from his Majesty, as rewards for their skill in archery."*

Ascham was not diappointed. The King gave him a pension of ten pounds a-year, estimated as equivalent to a hundred at the present period. It is a melancholy reflection, that he might have lived and died in extreme penury, notwithstanding his great merits in various departments of learning, if he had not sagaciously written

* Scripsi ego Toxophilum meum, non tam quod honestatem sagittationis et ejus usum scripto me illustrare instituerim, quam potessimum, ut hac via insisterem, periculum facturus, num ea aliquando vitæ meæ rationes *tenues admodum*, & infra communem studiosorum conditionem positas promovere potuerit: intellexi enim aliquot peritos sagittarios summa beneficia a regia majestate accepisse. *Lib. ii.*

There are other passages in his letters nearly to the same purpose.

on a subject which drew the attention of the king, and gratified his prevailing taste. Ascham, in this instance, proved himself a good toxophilite. He took a good aim, shot with strength and skill, and fixed his arrow in the target. All honest bowmen must wish that he had lived to enjoy his good fortune longer. But he was a valetudinarian, like most of the laborious students of his day, and died at fifty-three. Had he practised the art which he commended, a little more, he probably would have enjoyed better health, and might have lived to produce books far superior to his Toxophilus and his Schoolmaster.

But to return from the old treatise on archery, to the practice of it in the present age. The ladies seem to be ambitious of shooting darts, in a literal sense, as they have long been celebrated for doing execution by their figurative artillery. Above the childish bow and arrow of little Cupid, they take the weapons of the warrior, and emulate the prowess of Robin Hood and Ulysses. VENUS ARMED, has been the subject of several ancient and modern epigrams. The wit, however, tells us that she never conquers in arms; but that she is invincible when she approaches unarmed, and clad in native beauty. They intended, I believe, to explode the affectation of masculine dress, manners, and diversions, which has of late greatly predominated in the circles of fashion. Women wear beaver hats and broad-cloth coats like men; women hunt,* and sometimes shoot, not arrows only, but powder and shot; there are female jockeys, female swearers, female gamesters, female drinkers, and why, in this improving age, should there not be female boxers? The Roman emperors encouraged female gladiators; and there are features in modern times not unlike those of the Romans under the emperors. It is worth remarking, that before a lady can be perfectly well qualified for archery, or any other manly exercise of the belligerent kind, she must prepare herself, like the ancient Amazons, by the painful amputation of a beautiful part, the absence of which, no masculine dress can compensate. Venus, Hebe, Cupid, and the Graces, swoon at the very idea

* Mævia Tuscum
Figit aprum.....JUV.
Mævia hunts the Tuscan boar.

of this amputation: but Alecto, Megæra, and Tisiphone, make all hell resound with their plaudits, and grin horribly a ghastly smile of complacency at the hope of seeing their own deformity rendered less conspicuous by the crowd of their imitators. Their imitators have set a fashion of deformity; and all that is sweet in delicacy, and captivating in feminine grace, is hastening to follow it.

EVENING XXXVII.

ON FASTIDIOUS CONVERSATION.

THERE are persons so extremely refined and so delicately nice, that conversation, as it is commonly conducted, even among the sensible and well-bred, affords them but little pleasure; and as it appears among people in the middle rank, persons of plain sense and simple manners, actually puts them to *ineffable* torture.

This fastidiousness of conversation, where it is *real* though valued as a high distinction, and the cause of pride in those who possess it, is a great misfortune. The perfection which it expects is not to be found in this sublunary state; and in pursuit of it, disappointment is constantly incurred. In the various intercourse of life, the company of all sorts of people must sometimes be engaged in, and the majority may perhaps be inelegant, injudicious, and absurd; but still a really good understanding will make due allowance for defect of natural ability, defect of education, defect of good examples, and a hundred other defects, which must render conversation, as it is commonly met with in the world, very far from perfect. Good sense, united with good nature, and subdued to candor by experience, will find, amidst all these defects, something to afford pleasure, and something to contribute toward knowledge and improvement.

But this fastidiousness is oftener affected than real; and it is the *manner* of conversation which causes this disgust more frequently than the matter; for common sense is distributed without partiality to the majority of mankind in every rank of society. The artificial and refined modes of expressing it are indeed confined to those classes, whose

opulence affords a superior education, and whose situation enables them to catch the transient graces of the prevailing fashion. But this refinement often weakens while it polishes. And the plain common sense of ordinary people, forms a solid, massy ore, which men of sense will prize, notwithstanding the dirt and extraneous matter with which it may be incumbered. But the over-refined and over-delicate cannot stoop to pick up the most precious jewel from a dunghill. The jewel must be set in gold, and presented in a costly casket, or they turn away from it with expressions of disdain. They will not take even gold and silver, if it is the common currency. They must traffic, with pearls and diamonds, or with something else, if it is possible, still more exquisite.

But to the fastidious, not merely the vulgar, but those of liberal education and polite manners, are causes of *squeamishness*, if they are deficient in certain little graces, or modes of behavior, which are no more to solid sense and goodness of heart, than the shell of the nut is to the kernel. "Mr. Such-an-one," says one of the over-delicate fraternity or sisterhood, "is a very learned and good man, to be sure. Much may be learned from him. He is very entertaining to many, and not deficient in good nature and civility; but I know not how it is, I cannot bear his conversation: it is so unlike the fashionable ton of Sir Versatile Varnish. It wants a *je ne scai quoi*; that *indescribable something* which I believe is visible only to the purged eye of people of fashion. Sir Versatile Varnish is, to be suse, no scholar. He wrote us a letter the other day, with bad spelling and false grammar; but he has the art of pleasingfin conversation. You never think it worth while to remember any thing he says: but you listen to him while he speaks, and you are charmed. Mr. ——— is all that science and experience can contribute towards making a learned, a sensible, a wise, and a virtuous man; but he is awkward, and I cannot admit him to habits of familiarity. No; we must not visit him; but, however, we shall be at no loss for company, since Sir Versatile will be here very often, and Seignior ———, and Monsieur ———, have promised to spend a month or two with us, to enliven our summer residence at the dull mote in Hertfordshire."

The contempt for good and sensible people who have

not the *indescribable something*, in conversation, becomes in time, a degree of inveterate hatred, which no human creature should harbor towards another. The proud treat them for want of the *indescribable something*, as if they were of another species; and look down upon them, much as the imperious manager of a plantation looks down upon the negroes under his whip; and with far less esteem than the fastidious gentleman and lady behold their pointers, their grey-hounds, their hunters, and their lap-dogs.

Indeed this excessive delicacy originates more frequently in excessive self-conceit, and excessive ill nature, than from any excessive superiority of taste, or excessive discernment. The pride of the pretenders to it is flattered, and their malice gratified in finding something in every one, who has the misfortune to converse with them, wrong, defective, and disagreeable.

No virtue, no excellence moral or intellectual, no beauty, no innocence, can be secured from the malignant satire of persons who have once persuaded themselves that they have an *indescribable something* in their own persons, understandings, and manners, superior to the rest of mankind. Their whole delight and chief employment, as soon as their company is gone, is to ridicule and blame the behavior and character of every one whom they had just caressed and entertained at their tables, with Judas-like smiles, and dissembled hospitality; which, it must be confessed, is an *indescribable* baseness.

The persons most liable to this folly, in both sexes, are smatterers in literature, would-be wits, and half-bred people of fashion. Not furnished with a sufficient stock of real merit to rise by their own elasticity, they have no means of viewing themselves on the elevation they aspire at but by depressing all around them.

There is, indeed, so much affectation of superior taste, delicacy, and refinement; and it leads to such unmanly, unchristian, ungenerous treatment of others, that every man of solid understanding, who at the same time possesses a due sense of esteem for the human species, however unimproved in arts, must wish to discourage it, by denying it that respect and attention which its vanity claims as its due.

A microscopic eye for the discovery of defects and ug-

liness, is surely not desirable. If a power of vision so accurate and minute, is cultivated and acquired, let it be chiefly exerted in discovering the latent good qualities of our fellow-creatures ; the integrity, the genius, and virtue of every kind which often lies concealed under a forbidding outside, and escapes the notice of those pretenders to extraordinary discernment.

It is indeed impossible but that superior understanding, improved by the advantages of a liberal education, and the company of the learned, the polished, and the experienced, should see defects in those who have not enjoyed these benefits. But their superiority of understanding will teach them to make allowances for unavoidable blemishes ; and not to be implacably offended at little errors, deficiencies in forms, and neglect of decorum arising from ignorance or inattention ; at natural failings or deformities, to which themselves or their families are liable, as well as others, or at any thing else where no offence is intended. Such a conduct will be no less politic than benevolent ; for he who is offended at others, commonly offends them ; and creates a busy and vigilant enmity which will usually find, at some time or other, opportunities for severe retaliation.

It is the good-natured advice of Horace, that instead of magnifying and aggravating the faults of those with whom we converse, we should extenuate them, by giving them gentle appellations, just as a father palliates the bodily deformities of his child, by calling them pretty oddities, and lovely little deviations from the common and ordinary standard of nature. It is certain that the unaffected suavity of disposition which bears with involuntary error, and employs itself to find out excellencies to counterbalance faults in characters, contributes more to personal happiness and the comforts of society, than the acutest sagacity, malignantly employed in detecting and describing little blemishes and trifling deviations from the fluctuating standard of fashion.

EVENING XXXVIII.

ON SOME OF THE OLD SERMON WRITERS.

IT was the great misfortune of the old sermon writers, that they were obliged, by the fashion of their time, to preach an hour at least, and, on extraordinary occasions, much longer. Instead of compressing their subject, they were compelled by custom tediously to dilate it. They beat out their little gold, till it became a useless leaf; they spun their thread to such a degree of tenuity, that it became as subtile and as worthless as a cob-web.

The facetious Dr. Eachard, relates of an old preacher, that he took for his text, "But his delight is in the law of the Lord." He observed that every word was significant and expressive. "To begin with the first word, *but*. This "BUT" says he, is full of good wine; we will broach it, and taste a little—then proceed."

This instance, I imagine, is either feigned or exaggerated, to serve the purpose of the jocular writer; but it really gives no improper idea of the method which the old sermonizers pursued to eke out their sermons to their ordinary and most grievous dimensions.

The celebrated Dr. Donne thus begins a sermon* on the text, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness."

"This is no text for an hour-glass; if God would afford me Hezekiah's sign, *ut revertatur umbra*, that the shadow might go back upon the dial; or Joshua's sign, *ut sistat sol*, that the sun might stand still all the day, this were text enough to employ all the day, and all the days of our life. The lent which we begin now, is a full tithe of the year, but the hour which we begin now, is not a full tithe of this day, and therefore we should not grudge all that. But payment of tithes is become matter of controversy; and we, by our text, are directed to matters without controversy. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness."

Such is the exordium of the preacher, and without controversy it must have been a very comfortable hearing to

* Preached before the king, at Whitehall, February 16, 1620.

a shivering congregation, in the season of Lent, on the sixteenth of February. The quaint nonsense of the ordinal has promising a long discourse, was at least an admonition to the congregation to summon all their patience. Well might Mr. Boyle write a consolatory Essay on long sermons. He seems to allow an hour as a reasonable time, and the great object, in his days, seems to have been to gain the character of a fine preacher, not by quality, but by quantity of matter.

Let me be permitted to cite one or two other specimens from the same sermon of Dr Donne. "Must I be damned?" says he, "the evidence of my salvation is my *credo*, and I can *probo*; and if I must get to heaven by syllogism, my major is, *credo in Deum Patrem*, I believe in God the father, for Pater, *major*, the Father is greater than all, and my *minor* shall be *credo in Deum Filium*, I believe in God the Son, *qui exiit de Patre*, he came from God, and my conclusion, which must proceed from major and minor, shall be *credo in Spiritum Sanctum*, I believe in the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from Father and Son; and this syllogism brought me into the militant church at my baptism, and this will carry me into the triumphant, in my transmigration, for doctrine of salvation is matter *without controversy*."

This curious argumentation takes its rise from the words *without controversy* in the text, which probably mean no more than *without doubt*; but the taking of the words of the text, and descanting upon them separately, served the two-fold purpose of filling up the hour, and of obtaining the praise of *sticking to the text*, for the accomplishment of which the preacher would not stick at the most far-fetched assembly of explanation.

Dr. Donne was a man of great wit, sense, and learning. Nothing but the unfortunate fashion of debating on words, merely to fill up the time, could make it him to preach in a spirit of unnatural manner, very nearly approaching to the nonsensical.

I will close him the present time a passage with which he concludes the sermon from which the above sentences are extracted.

"And because God dwells *in lucem inaccessibilem*, in a glorious light, which you cannot see here, gravely him in that in which you may see him, in that wherein he hath

manifested himself, glorify him in his glorious gospel: employ your beams of glory, honor, favor, fortune, in transmitting the same glory to your children, as you received it from your fathers, for in this consists the mystery of godliness, which is faith with a pure conscience." *O si sic omnia!*

But he begins his next sermon with a passage, which again seems to be a demand from the pulpit, for patience. The text is, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Alluding to the hour-glass which stood by his side, he says, "If I had a secular glass, a glass that would run an age, if the two hemispheres of the world were composed in the form of such a glass, and all the world calcined and burnt to ashes, and all the ashes, and sands, and atoms of the world put into that glass, it would not be enough to tell the godly man, what his treasure, and the object of his heart is."

He proceeds thus a little lower: "Our text stands as that proverbial, that hieroglyphical Pythagoras's Y; that hath first a stalk, a stem to fix itself, and then spreads into two beams. The stem, the stalk of this letter, this Y in the first word of the text, is that particle of argumentation, FOR. . . . and then opens this symbolical, this cabalistical letter, this Y, into two horns, two beams, two branches; one broader, but on the left hand, denoting the treasures of the world; the other narrower, but on the right hand, denoting treasure laid up for the world to come. Be sure you turn the right way."—Here we see the hammer of the gold-beater, working hard on the anvil, to produce a film.

It must be owned, however, that many of these old writers abound with ideas, which, though they violate decorum and are greatly strained, yet afford much entertainment to a curious reader; entertainment resulting not only from their oddity, but their ingenuity. One might make a considerable collection from them of witty remarks, approaching to *bon mots*. The modern writer, though infinitely more elegant and decorous, is often insipid on comparison. The old writers labored hard to produce matter from their own brain, which though often flimsy as Arachne's web, had the merit of ingenious originality. They often snatched a grace, by venturing to say daring things; things that advanced on the very brink of

impropriety; but the modern is restrained and cooled by caution, or timidity. The refined congregations of the present day would not tolerate such adventurous thoughts, such hazardous expressions, such approaches to downright burlesque and nonsense. The awe of an audience checks the preacher, like tying the wings of an eagle.

Whoever wishes to entertain himself with the quaintness of the old sermon writers, will find a fund of such entertainment, as he seeks, in the sermons of Bishop Andrews, Barten Halliday, Gataker, Donne, Saunderson, South, and many others of the last century. At the same time, he will discover in them a rich mine of fine sense often well expressed; and a vein of piety, simplicity, and godly sincerity, which no awkwardness of manner and expression can ever depreciate.

But to the honor of the present race of divines, it must be acknowledged, that they greatly excel their predecessors in preserving the decorum and dignity of the pulpit. They exhibit a gravity and modesty which peculiarly becomes the chaste matron, Religion. Their decent mode of preaching, raises a respectful attention to their doctrine, far more favorable to the advancement of religion, than learning sullied with pedantry, exhortation vulgarized by low wit, argument perplexed by scholastic subtilty, exposition spoiled by quaintness, and pious declamation rendered ludicrous by humor and ill-placed pleasantry.

EVENING XXXIX.

ON THE INCONSISTENCES OF AVARICE, AND ON PETTY AVARICE.

FROM a strange inconsistency in the human mind, it sometimes happens that men who are sufficiently generous and bountiful on great occasions disgrace and distress themselves by a parsimony in such trifles as are utterly unworthy of their care. This mean part of the character, the overvaluing of trifles, has not escaped that accurate observer of the living world, Theophrastus. He has described the quality which forms it, under the denomination of MICROLOGIA, or that species of avarice

which estimates little things greatly above their real value; or which notices minute articles which are beneath its regard.

He enumerates several instances of this petty niggardliness, more applicable indeed to his own times than to ours, but yet such as modern manners too often resemble. Among many other specimens of this narrowness, he mentions that his Micrologus, when at a public feast, or perhaps at a dinner at his own house, instead of being engaged by the conversation, attends solely to reckoning how many glasses each of the guests has drunk, and computing arithmetically how many bottles are on the whole exhausted.

The ancient satirists and comic writers* are very severe and facetious on this sordid disposition. Plautus, describing a *petty miser*, for so I shall term the man of this character, gives us to understand, that when his nails have been cut by the operator, whom the moderns would call a chiropodist, he carefully wraps up the parings, and hugging himself with the consciousness of his treasure, pockets the precious deposit, and walks off with an air of perfect self-complacency. When he washes his hands, he laments with a sigh, that so much water must be thrown away. If he sees a little smoke issuing from his chimney, he grieves, as if his house were on fire; and cannot help thinking that it is a pity so much good smoke should be lost in the air, which would have served to smoke the flitch of bacon, if it had happily been confined within doors. By these strokes of hyperbole, the poet means to hint that such men cannot bear to part with any thing, not only not the parings, but not even the dirt under their nails.† The character has always afforded a

* Casaubon, in his notes to the chapter on the Micrologia in Theophrastus, has collected a number of curious appellations which the Greek writers give to the *petty miser*. They are similar to those of the English *skin-flint, split-farthing, nip-cheese, pinch-penny, close-fist, hold-fast, gripe*; from which we may conclude, that this irrational character was always common, and always the subject of comic ridicule. As to ridicule, the miser always said in his heart,

Populus me sibilat... at mihi plaudo
Ipse domi....simul ac nummos contemplor in arca. *Hor.*

Casubon refers to this passage in Plautus, whence the ideas in the subsequent description are taken.

† Ne *cry* quidem.

fine topic for comedy and farce; but I am not sure that it ought not to be viewed with pity rather than derision, as it appears to resemble insanity.

Yet some men of enlightened minds and singular liberality of ideas, have exhibited in their conduct, strange instances of petty parsimony. Paper, is an article, which, considering its utility and beauty, may be deemed cheap; yet some who are able to make the best use of it, by filling it with good sense, wit, poetry, and eloquence, have been niggards of it in the extreme.

That accurate observer, Swift, gave Pope the epithet of *paper-saving;* which he certainly deserved, for I have seen, in the British Musæum, some of his manuscripts written on the covers of letters, so closely, as almost to confound the lines of the poet with the superscription.

Chapelain, a polite and famous scholar of France, was expected, from his connection with Voiture and Balzac, to leave behind him many letters of great elegance. But they were found on examination, unworthy of the public eye; and it was assigned as a reason, that Chapelain being of the *paper-saving* class, studied nothing in writing his letters, but to make them as short as possible, that he might save a bit of paper. It is a wonder that these parsimonious scribes did not omit dots and tittles to save ink.

Petty parsimony is very common in the articles of stationary. Many write in so small a character, and so closely, to spare paper, that it is impossible to decypher their manuscripts. Many dilute their ink till it is thin and pale as water, and soon becomes yellow as saffron, or vanishes and leaves not a trace behind. Many wear their pens to stumps as little fit for writing as a skewer. Many grudge wax enough to secure their letter from opening in its passage by the post from London to Islington, and treasure up a wafer with as much care as a guinea. All these, at the same time, shall be rich enough to keep equipages, and villas, and to indulge in every delight of expensive luxury.

Some there are who had rather not hear from their best friends and nearest relations, than pay the postage of a letter; who are perpetually engaged in broils with carriers, stage coachmen, hackney coachmen, watermen, and porters, about over charges of a penny or two-pence, though the time they spend, and the uneasiness they feel in the

dispute, are such, as pounds could not compensate; and after all, the sum in debate is of no more consequence to them than the dust on their shoes, or the powder in their perukes. Add to which, that they usually have the worst of it in the result; their foolish parsimony being such, as to lead them to refuse payment when it is due, and can be legally exacted.

The *petty miser* is sure to pick a personal quarrel with the tax-gatherer; and treats all persons who come with a legal demand for money due to others, as if they came to make unjustifiable claims upon him for their own advantage. He goes to his country house at Hackney, for the benefit of the air, but has stopped up more than half the windows in it, out of spite to Mr. Pitt. He found that the stoppage of two windows more would save a crown a-year: and therefore, notwithstanding the remonstrances of his wife and daughter, he plastered up the bow-window, and one of the side sashes in the drawing-room.

If the *petty miser* goes on a party of pleasure, or a rural excursion, he spoils all the comfort of it by suffering his temper to be ruffled by quarrels with post-chaise boys, waiters, boot-catchers, or turnpike-men, about pence and halfpence. Though he has spent many pounds in the excursion, he comes home without having received the pleasure he pursued; because he lost the power of being pleased, in losing his temper in controversies for sums amounting, perhaps, in the whole, to half a crown.

The petty miser is extremly penurious in all the articles of dress. He will not lay aside a coat, or a hat, till they are quite worn out, though the very boys laugh at his ludicrous appearance, as he passes along the streets. In a public mourning, he brings out a quondam black coat, which was new at the death of queen Anne, and has now undergone a curious change of color, like the leaves in autumn; and from a raven-grey, is become a bottle-green. His servants, in the mean time, are clad in as good liveries as those of other people.

If he is caught in a shower, in returning from the Bank, where he has received a large dividend, he will not call a coach, nor stop at a coffee-house, but stands an hour or two under a gate way, and at last trudges home in the rain, with such a cold and sorethroat, and a wig so much in-

ined, that the emulsions and reparations cost more than the coach would have amounted to, if it had been hired for the whole day; but he looks with delight at the shilling he saved, and triumphs in the wisdom of his economy.

If he gives a pittance, which is but rare, to an importunate petitioner, or to persons who collect for a charity, or for the lecturer of the parish, he throws it down with so ill a grace, and with so many murmurs at the multitude of taxes and the hardness of the times, that the receivers feel themselves hurt at the gift, and would gladly go without the money to escape the unpleasant rencounter. At the same time he subscribes liberally to the relief of debtors confined for small debts, and to the Asylum.

In the months of January and February, he sits shivering by a fire, which you might cover with your hand; though he is racked with a rheumatism, which a warm room would relieve, and though, in every other apartment in his house, the fires are as large as those who sit by them chuse to make them. He does not begin fires till the first of November, and ends them on the last day of March; because it was the good old custom of his family, and good old customs should never be laid aside. Nobody chuses to come near him at these cold periods, and his fingers and feet swell with chilblains; but he does not mind that, as he is keeping up a good old custom.

When he is ill, instead of seeking the advice of an apothecary or physician, he prescribes for himself from Buchan's Domestic Medicine, or an old family receipt-book of his grandmother's, and buys a penny-worth of drugs at the shop, which he administers to himself, in consequence of which he has brought on disorders which nearly cost him his life, and, at the same time, large sums in daily and long-repeated fees to the Doctor. But notwithstanding this, he is an annual contributor to more than one dispensary, established for supplying the poor with medicine and advice gratuitously.

I believe he is of the same species as the miser, Hopkins, celebrated by Mr. Pope; for, though he is always very saving of candles-ends during his life, he is attended with numerous torches at his funeral, being sumptuously buried by the heir who is so much benefited by his parsimonious *life*.

The inconsistent miser, who places too high a value on trifles, and yet is as free as others in some parts of his expences, is a curious, but no uncommon phænomenon. It is caused by want of reasoning, by thoughtlessness of a peculiar kind, by early habits of meanness acquired before the fortune was made, and at a time when little things were really important. This early association is not easily corrected in old age, or even in manhood; and he, to whom a pair of shoes or a coat were things of prime consequence, when he was an apprentice, a clerk, or a porter, can scarcely help thinking them equally so, when his industry and virtue have clothed him in scarlet, put a gold chain round his neck, and seated him in the coach of the lord mayor.

I should be gratified, if any of these hints might correct the error, which often poisons the sweets of good fortune, and renders men of singular integrity, industry, fidelity, and even partial generosity, the objects of hatred to those whom their petty avarice pinches, and of supreme contempt to the common observer.

EVENING XL.

ON ARTFUL, PROSTITUTED, AND EXCESSIVE PRAISE.

THE prostitution of praise, for venal purposes, is a species of deception which deserves to be ranked among the frauds of the vilest depredator on property. It robs virtue of the best among its sublunary rewards, and bestows it on crafty villainy, on plausible ignorance, or hypocritical pretence; on every character, however idle, useless, and worthless, which is at the same time subtle enough to wear a mask to save appearances, and can join, with an air of gravity, in the interested collusion. I do not at present comprehend flattery under the prostitution of praise of which I am speaking; but merely that practice of extolling men beyond measure, to serve their interest, which is known by the cant name of PUFFING; a name good enough indeed for the thing signified: but a name which implies something as far beneath real praise, as

Dr. Rock, of notorious memory, was inferior to that honor of human nature, Dr. Heberden.

When a parent dwells with rapture on the genius and improvements of a lubberly lad, and a lover expatiates with ecstacy on beauties in his mistress which she does not possess, few can be deceived: because the world is sagacious enough to discover, and good-natured enough to make allowances for, the blind partiality of immoderate affection.

But honest affection, and blind and mistaken partiality have no concern in the prostitution of praise, which I at present contemplate. This originates in low cunning, and is compatible with sovereign contempt for the very object which it extols to the skies.

The artful puffer is a philosopher of the Chesterfieldian school. His great object is to make the world his *bubble*. He is perfectly acquainted with the best methods of sporting the puff-selfish, and can throw in even censure itself in such an adroit manner, as to contribute ultimately to his praise. He has a thousand arts in conversation, acquired by studying the great founder of the sect, which tend to set off his paltry beads and French paste, and make them mistaken for real pearls, and diamonds of the first water. But I intend only to view him at present as the puffer of others, of his relations, friends, patrons, and of all others by whom some selfish purpose is to be accomplished, his interest advanced, his vanity tickled, or his pride, either personal or of family, indulged.

The puffer, we will suppose, has a cousin, or a brother, or a common acquaintance, who, stimulated by the hope of gain or preferment, has produced an abortive poem, or a ricketty treatise in prose. The finest type and paper has been used; plates inserted by the most eminent artists; copies sent free of carriage, and all bound and lettered in the manner of Baumgarten, to many great people, famous critics, eminent literati; yet all in vain. The ill-formed bantling cannot stand upon its legs. Puffing is as necessary, as the bellows of the Humane Society, to resuscitate the expiring corpse. To work, therefore, the puffing professor goes, with all the zeal of an operator who expects to receive the silver medal.

"Have you seen," he asks in all companies to which *he can gain* access, "have you seen the excellent Poem,

or Dissertation, which has such a run, and which some attribute to Mr. A. or Dr. B.?—My God, Sir, it is a fine performance. The language so elegant, the ideas so new; the—the—in short, buy it. It will be a standard-book. But I must not leave you under the mistake of its being the production of Mr. A. or Dr. B: it is, to let you into a great secret, it is the work of my cousin; as promising a young man, I suppose, as any in the three kingdoms. O my God, Sir, it is astonishing with parts he possesses. He wrote this excellent book off-hand—mere play to him. He is idle—the dog is idle—a fault of all great geniuses—but then he has no occasion for plodding. Depend upon it he will make a great figure; and be soon at the head of his profession in rank, as he is in merit, and has been some time, notwithstanding his youth."

If a friend of his brings out a play, more soporific than the dullest sermon, he declares that the house overflowed, and that it was received with repeated bursts of applause; though the few that were there, were admitted by orders; and every one of them caught sore throats by the chill blasts that blew through the empty rows of the pit, boxes, and gallery.

He goes to a charity sermon at a crowded chapel, where his nephew holds forth, in consequence of his suggesting that a young man should put himself forward in the world, or else he will be neglected and starve. The poor nephew has the misfortune to have an impediment in his speech, forces what little he can articulate through the nasal orifices, and is obliged to that great professor of theology, Dr. Trusler, for all his divinity. It is true, the congregation grumble, and very few shillings jingle in the church-wardens' plate at the door; but the puffing professor intends that his nephew shall stand for a neighboring lectureship then vacant, and therefore he sallies forth, and informs all that he can take the liberty of speaking to in the parish, that he really was never better entertained in his whole life, than he was with the discourse of a mighty pretty young man, who preached a charity sermon at Fashion-street chapel, this morning. There was in it all the perspicuity of Tillotson, and all the solidity of Clarke, united with the florid elegance of Seed, the pathos of Sterne, and the copious fluency of Blair. "O, my God,

Sir, he was great indeed. Nothing theatrical neither in his manner. No, no; nothing but the plain, dignified simplicity, which is the best garb of religion. A most excellent preacher! It is not the lot of every one to wear a mitre; but it is more glorious to deserve it. A very flattering circumstance to myself it is, that I have the honor to call this most promising young divine, my near relation."

He has another friend or relation a painter. "Have you been to the Exhibition?" O yes. "Then, I hope you took due notice of the best picture in the room, Mr. Le Daub's portrait of that most excellent preacher, my nephew, the prebendary, that preached the famous sermon, that made so much noise, some years back, at Fashion-street chapel. Indeed you could not but be struck with it. The original is as fine a figure, I suppose, as ever existed, and the picture has done it justice indeed; ample justice; for it breathes, it speaks—My God, it is too much—art has outstripped nature. The resemblance is actually more like nature than the living original; all life, fire, and energy. Poor Sir Joshua! it was unlucky for you that Le Daub's picture was hung up so near your feeble attempts. Le Daub, I suppose, bids fair to be the greatest portrait painter this country ever beheld. But he has too much business. People of fashion will be painted by nobody else now."

His friends and kinsfolk in the professions of medicine and law are all extolled in similar strains of hyperbolical eulogy. And as he pronounces his panegyrics, with an air of confidence, apparently arising from superior judgment, he misleads great numbers, and has actually raised to some degree of eminence a tribe of poor creatures, who, without puffing, would long ago have sunk in penury and oblivion.

But his puffing exertions are most ardently and laboriously displayed in the field of politics. He is not without hope of raising himself to some valuable post, when the party whom he puffs, shall come into power.

"Was you at the House last night?" No; I went to see the play that you recommended. "Well, you were, no doubt, admirably entertained; but yet, I wish you had been in the House. O, my God, Sir, I suppose there never was such a display of brilliancy since the world issued out of chaos. My friend Mr. ——— was great

indeed—astonishingly great—great beyond expression, beyond conception. No eloquence but his own can do justice to his stupendous powers. I look upon it, we have the three greatest *luminaries* now in the House, that the world ever saw, and all on one side; they have been called, indeed, through lack of better comparisons, the Demosthenes, the Cicero, and the Pericles of the age. But, my dear Sir, Demosthenes, Cicero, and Pericles, were not fit to hold a candle to Mr. ———, or Mr. ———, or my Lord———. They were children and fools to them. I look upon it, eloquence in the hands of this glorious *triumvirate*, has reached the achmé of perfection. Upon my soul, nature and art are so combined in them, have wrought in them so finished a work, that they can go no farther; they have exhausted all their powers, and must rest and sleep for ages, before they can give birth to productions resembling in the remotest degree, these great *luminaries*. They thunder, they lighten, they shake the whole nation like an earthquake, by their stupendous oratory. It was said of Plato, that if the Gods were to converse with mortals, they would adopt his language. It might be more truly said of Mr. ———. O Chatham, Chatham, thou never hadst an idea of eloquence. If the *luminaries* could but come into power, how would the nation flourish! Such powers—are equal to the government of the universe; fit to wield the real thunder and lightning above; fit to rule the privy council of heaven, or rather to depose and usurp its dominion. The earth is unworthy of such *luminaries*. The generality want power of vision to bear their brilliancy. Therefore these men are not in office:—but, like roses, *blush unseen*, and waste their fragrance in the desert air."

But as the puffer blows a prosperous gale on those whom he wishes to serve, however undeserving; so he breathes a foul pestilential blast on the fairest characters, and the richest desert, which are rising to fame and fortune without being likely to promote his interest, his vanity, his party, and his profession.

He studies the arts of detraction with as much attention as the arts of unmerited praise.

"Who is that scribbler whom you mention?" he cries, when he hears another praising a man of merit; "I really never heard his name before. Has he written any

thing? Bless me, I make a point of seeing every thing of any repute; but I never was fortunate enough to meet with Mr. ——— (I beg your pardon; I forget the person's name you mentioned)—Mr. ———'s Works, But I will inquire—I dare say I can get them in quires at the cheese-monger's."

"Such an one is a good preacher," says somebody. "I really cannot speak to that point. I, for my part, was very drowsy: and, egad! all the people in the pew where I sat, who were decidedly the most intelligent in the church, were asleep, except my friend Professor ——, who must be acknowledged to be a good judge, and he was stuffing his pudding sleeves into his mouth to prevent a fit of laughter."

A charming picture that of Sir Joshua's—La! "la! The knight grows old—breaks apace—indeed I never saw any thing to admire in his fugacious colors."

Praise the physician who has saved your life, or the judge who has done you justice, and he lifts up his brows and exclaims: "Dr. H. is an old woman. Judge ——, another; Lord —— does not understand law—but may be a mighty good man for aught I know."

As to statesmen and senatorial orators, they are all fools and knaves, but those of the party by whom he hopes to be rewarded for puffing and *paragraphing*, with something more solid than empty praise.

In dispensing both censure and applause, he has no regard to truth, and the conviction of his own mind; but has arrived at such depravity as to be able to invent and propagate fictitious stories to confirm his sentences of men and their conduct, whether favorable or unfavorable. It is from such men as he that *paragraphs in the public prints* appear blackening or brightening individuals, for interested or malicious purposes, without the least attention to delicacy, justice, or veracity. The evil has indeed been carried to such lengths as to have almost become its own remedy; for the suspicions of mankind are awakened by reiterated deception, and credulity and malice, from having been often and ridiculously duped, begin to learn distrust and candor.

But the misfortune is, that just and merited praise often loses all its effect by being confounded with the hyperbolical and false encomiums of the puffer; and that modesty

and truth, unassuming, unpretending, and rather diffident from the delicacy attending them, are either left unnoticed, or robbed of all their honors by the bold and interested detractor. The cultivation of solid worth is thus discouraged; and a study of the mean arts of securing the rewards of virtue without possessing its intrinsic value, promoted. Private happiness is thus diminished among those who deserve to enjoy it unmolested; and the public welfare injured by discouraging virtuous and laborious exertion. Puffers ought therefore to be exposed, to be avoided as nuisances to society, and viewed with as much suspicion, as sharpers, swindlers, gamesters, and the whole fraternity of unprincipled adventurers.

Immoderate praise is, indeed, become very suspicious; and a man of sense is as much upon his guard against its effect on his mind, as against the advertisements of quack-doctors, and the *particulars* of auctioneers. He argues, that there must be something ugly that requires so much gilding to cover it; something rotten, or blemished where the thing recommended cannot be obtruded on notice without a profusion of paint and varnish.

It is diverting to consider how highly every little excellence is praised in the present age, by those who are interested in forcing it into celebrity. As the orator of the hammer denominates a cit's country-box, a villa and a mansion; a cistern, a reservoir; a horsepond, a canal; a ditch, a trout-stream; a grass-plot, ten feet by twelve, a paddock: so a little sprig of divinity is equalled, in the praises of the puffer, to a Tillotson; a young practitioner, that has hardly walked the hospital, to a Boerhaave; a pragmatical pleader, as soon as he has thrown a tie-wig over his toupee, to a Coke or a Littleton; a petty catgut-scraper, to an Apollo; a canvass-spoiler, to an Apelles; a rhymer, to a Pope; a builder of a messuage, two rooms on a floor, to a Wren. Every hill is brought low by him, and every valley exalted.

Such eulogies are lavished on mediocrity, or even demerit, as were never given, in their life-time at least, to Lord Chancellor Bacon, to Sir Isaac Newton, to Shakspeare, to Milton, to Handel, to all whom Fame has justly placed in the most honorable niches of her temple. It seems to be an adopted maxim in the present age, that if glory come not till after death, it comes too late. And the goddess

Fame seems to attend to it judiciously; for as she gives so much during the lives of her votaries, she withholds all memory of most of them immediately on their decease.

Upon the whole, it may be said with truth, that praise, from its prostitution, is in many cases become satire, and satire an honor; and that censure or neglect is now, in a variety of instances, creditable; for it proves that the man to whom it is shewn, has left his merit to stand or fall, as it might be able of itself; and in the honesty of an upright and ingenious spirit, has scorned to use sinister and collusive arts to repel the weapons of envy and malice.

EVENING XLI.

ON ENDEAVORS TO DERIVE IMPORTANCE BY AFFECTED HASTE AND PRETENDED AVOCATIONS.

AMONG the many modes of assuming consequence, adopted by men of little sense and great vanity, is that of being always in a hurry.

Sir Hurricane Bustleton having inherited a very good fortune, and being trained to no profession, has less business on his hands than most people. But his ambition is to be thought a man of business, and his great pride is in what he terms, not without many complaints, his multiplicity of avocations.

If you call upon him, the servant is sure to deny him the first time, and to tell you that he cannot possibly be spoken with, unless you come before ten o'clock in the morning. You go at the time appointed. The servant carries up your name, and you are desired to wait in the parlor till Sir Hurry can leave a gentleman who is now with him on particular business. You wait at least an hour, when Sir Hurry comes running down stairs, rushing into the room, and banging the door as if he were pursued by a bailiff. His hat, cane, and both his gloves, are in *one* hand; while with two fingers of the other, he just *touches* your palm, and then draws his watch from his *fob, and* after applying it to his ear with seeming alarm, *accosts* you in the following manner without giving you an

opportunity to answer him one syllable, or to cause a moment's interruption :—

"Bless me, I did not think it was so late. I beg a thousand pardons; but I have a particular engagement at eleven. I know you will excuse me. But pray how does Mrs. Patience do? and all the little ones? John—bring my great coat."

Then, having drawn out a little memorandum-book, he hums over, in an uninterrupted soliloquy—"Sir Richard, at twelve—Lord Robert, at one—his Grace, at two—confound these engagements—O, Mr. Patience, will you dine with me at seven to-day? I shall then be able to speak to you; I hope so at least—unless a letter of great consequence should arrive by the post. If it should, you will have the candor to excuse my absence. My Lady will do the honors." Then looking at his watch again, and stammering, "good morning," he flies off like an arrow from a bow, and shuts the door with a vehemence, which makes all Bedford-square re-echo.

If you take the pains to follow him, you find him lounging half an hour at a print-seller's window, or at the shew-glass of a buckle-shop, or cheapening a tooth-pick, or parading up and down Bond-street, till he is tired; and then resting himself in a coffee-house; till he sallies forth to pay a few morning calls in the afternoon to people as idly busy as himself; and thus, with perhaps a gallop in Rotten-row, gets rid of the tedious hours which intervene between the hour of rising and the hour of dinner.

Mr. Patience, however, having had the honor of invitation to dine with Sir Hurry, and seeing very little likelihood of being able to speak at present, upon the real business which he came up from York about, attends punctually at seven. Sir Hurricane is not yet come home. But in about a quarter of an hour his arrival is announced with such a rap, as realizes the fictitious story of Salmoneus's thunder In he runs, puffing, blowing, and wiping his face; and with a thousand interruptions, makes his apologies, declaring that he came away now before the business that detained him was brought to a conclusion. The dinner is now brought in, quite spoiled either by overdoing, or by being kept till it is cold. "It cannot be helped, my dear. Mr. Patience will, I am sure, excuse it, as he knows every thing must give way to business.

Egad! I am glad I thought of it. Has Leasum been here? I must write a line to him before I sit down. Do, pray Mr. Patience, begin.—I will be with you in a moment." Away he goes to a corner of the room, employs three or four footmen to bring paper, pen, ink, letter-case, sealing-wax, and wax-taper; curses the pen, curses the ink, tears the paper, flings it into the fire, then returns to dinner, vowing and protesting that he will get rid of this multiplicity of avocations which thus breaks in upon his convivial pleasures. After swallowing a wing of a chicken, and two or three glasses of Madeira, he starts like one frightened in a dream, and striking his forehead with his palm, deplores the treachery of his memory; for he recollects too late, that he was to have dined with the Committee today. But it does not signify; if he gets there by nine o'clock, he shall be in time to do business, which is the main thing. At last, really weary with his own affected activity, he sits down and finishes his repast, but not without several momentary fits of absence, many nods, shrugs, and broken soliloquies, significant of the multitude and profundity of his cogitations.

Poor Patience diverts himself with the Baronet's absurdity; but eats his dinner, and enjoys the conversation of my Lady and the children, though he has not a hope of opening upon the business he came upon, as Sir Hurricane is to go out at nine, and he himself is obliged to set out in one of the night stages for Yorkshire. He takes his leave, after having agreed with Sir Hurry to transact the negociation by letter.

Sir Hurry receives a long epistle from him in a few days, and immediately sits down and writes the following answer, in a hand scarcely legible through extreme precipitation:

"Dear Sir,

"Your's is just come to hand. It requires, I see, much consideration. But I cannot command a moment's leisure. Hope to be able in a few months. Jaded to death. A dozen letters to write by this night's post; besides a multiplicity of avocations in the evening. Excuse haste and blots. My servant waits to fold this letter. Hope he will direct it right. Your's &c. in haste,

"HURRICANE BUSTLETON."

The next day, being Sunday, he fixes upon for his journey to Tunbridge-wells, and thence to Brighton on the Sunday following. His own horses cannot run fast enough without injury. They are therefore sent down at leisure the day before; and four hacks are put to the coach, which is laden before, behind, at top, and at bottom. "Sirrahs," he exclaims to the post-boys, "drive as fast as possible, especially through all the towns. I cannot bear to creep, like a snail, through a nasty town. Drive, I say, as if the devil was in you; or I shall remember you at the end of the stage, in a manner you will not like." At the same time, he holds up a yellow coin, which never fails to operate like a spur of the best construction. Away the horses fly, as if they had wings; but luckily, they have not; I say, for if they had, they could not gloriously bespatter the coach from bottom to top with the mud of Kent-street, and the dirt of Lewisham and Bromley. The dogs bark; children and nurses squall; all the doors and windows are crowded with old maids and young maids; the hostlers at the inns admire, and hollo to the three footmen who come galloping after, Who is it? who is it? Sir Hurricane, Sir Hurricane, they reply; and the whole town resounds the name of Sir Hurricane, the great Baronet, going to Tunbridge. Two or three horses fall victims; but the baronet arrives, fortunately, in time to have his hair dressed before he dines tête-à-tête with his Lady, at a little lodging in a vamped cottage on Mount-Misery.

Sir Hurricane Bustleton is so rapid in his progress, that it would tire even Pegasus himself to keep pace with him. I shall therefore take leave of him at Mount-Misery, with reminding him, that true dignity is never in a hurry; and assuring him that the hurry of importance so much affected in travelling, and all other motions by those who have really nothing important to do, increases their insignificance in the eyes of men of sense, by shewing how contemptible a shift they are driven to, merely to exhibit the external appearance of that consequence, which they do not possess, and cannot acquire by riches and titles, unaccompanied with personal merit.

EVENING XLII.

ON A LATIN POEM ON THE ART OF NURSING.

PHYSICIANS have often written didactic poems on various subjects connected with the business of their faculty. Armstrong's poem on Health, is one of the best I have seen; but the *Syphilis* of Fracastorius, and the *Pædotrophia* of Sammarthanus, are not without distinguished beauty.

Though Sammarthanus's *Pædotrophia*, or, *Art of Nursing*, is in Latin; yet the poet descends to such minute precepts as really concern the nurses and gossips, who, unless they are as expert in the Latin as in the vulgar tongue, will not be the better for them.

The following passage, in which the poet recommends to mothers the suckling of their own infants, is exquisitely beautiful:

Ipsæ etiam Alpinis villosæ in cautibus ursæ,
Ipsa etiam tigres, et quicquid ubique ferarum est,
Debita servandis concedunt ubera natis;
Tu, quam miti animo natura benigna creavit,
Exuperes feritate feras? nec te tua tangant
Pignora, nec querulos pueri e gutture planctus;
Nec lacrymas misereris, opemque injusta recuses,
Quam præstare tuum est, quæ te pendebit ab una?
Cujus onus teneris hærebit dulce lacertis
Infelix puer, et molli se pectore sternet?
Dulcia quis primi captabit gaudia risus,
Et primas voces, et blæsæ murmura linguæ?
Tone fruenda alii potes ista relinquere, demens,
Tantique esse putas teretis servare papillæ,
Integrum decus et juvenilem in pectore florem.

Tu, cui concedunt meliorem numina mentem,
Sume ultro quodcunque operæ, quodcunque laboris,
Ut serves opus ipsa tuum et pia munera præstes.

"The very bears on the Alpine rocks, the very tigers themselves, and the fiercest wild beasts on the face of the earth, give suck to their young ones. Will you then, whom nature has kindly formed with tender sympathy, exceed the brutes in cruelty? And will you not suffer the little pledges of your own loves to touch you, and will you *not pity* the moans and tears of the poor infants? And *will you* refuse your aid which it is your duty to afford, *and which* depends upon you alone? In whose arms shall

the sweet burden be laid; on whose soft bosom shall the poor child recline? Who first shall taste the delight of the first smiles, listen to the first syllables, and the babbling of its lisping tongue? Ah, foolish woman! will you let another enjoy all this pleasure? Is it worth while to lose so much for the sake of preserving beauty and delicacy of shape?

"I exhort you, who, by the blessing of heaven, have better principles, to take upon you whatever trouble and fatigue may attend this maternal duty, that you may preserve your own work, and perform the pious office of a good mother."

I must leave this passage to be dilated on by husbands who wish to inculcate the salutary doctrine which they contain. The verses gave me a high opinion of the taste and sensibility of their writer; and it would be a happy circumstance for *babes and sucklings* if they could be as persuasive as they are pleasing.

I will add another passage, excellent both for its advice and composition, on giving the child due exercise:

Nec minus inde agita, sublataque mollibus ulnis
Interdum exerce leni corpuscula motu,
Multa hilari simul ore jocans: neque clausa reconde
Usque domi in latebris, sed apertas defer in auras,
Dum nullæ sudo nebulæ, dum purior æther,
Et nitidum lenes ludunt per innane Favoni;
Ut cœlo et varia gavisus imagine rerum
Assuescat luci puer, Authoremque potentem
Qua potis, admirans primis agnoscat ab annis.

"Exercise their little bodies with a gentle motion, talking to them at the same time cheerfully. Neither keep them within doors always, but carry them into the open air, while the sky is serene, while the air is clear, and the zephyrs play around; and the little one, rejoicing at the sight of heaven and the various objects around him, may be accustomed to the light of day, and, struck with admiration, learn even from his infancy to venerate, in some degree, the Almighty Maker."

Monsieur de St. Marthe, or Sammarthanus, as he is classically called, is a poet of the first class among the imitators of ancient elegance. He was born in 1536, and died in 1623.

Like the poets of his time, he has furnished a volume *divided into Lyrics, Elegies, Sylvæ*, Epigrammata, et *Cantica, or Sacred Poems.* The *Pædotrophia* is the best

of his works; but he who has a taste for modern Latin poetry, will find much entertainment in every part of his volume.

Subjoined to the poems are three books of *Elogia* in prose, which contain many entertaining biographical anecdotes of French literati, in a classical style, and a diction, that though it may perhaps be thought too florid, is yet engaging, because it is animated.

EVENING XLIII.

ON THE NECESSITY OF LATIN, TO UNDERSTAND WITH ACCURACY MANY ENGLISH WORDS, ESPECIALLY IN OUR OLD WRITERS.

I HAVE often maintained the necessity of understanding Latin and Greek in order to understand English completely: and I have heard the doctrine controverted, and attributed to a pedantical desire of enhancing the value of the learned languages.

The authors of the last century afford many proofs of this necessity. I have accidentally noticed the following passages in the works of Bishop Taylor, and they appear to me to be decisive.

The Bishop says, in his *Ductor Dubitantium, The Arabian physicians endeavor to* ELEVATE *and lessen the miraculous conception.*

A mere English reader will either not understand this at all, or understand it in such a manner as to render it contradictory and nonsensical. He will understand *elevate* in its proper signification, to raise or exalt: whereas the author means quite the contrary, *to depress and to lower.* The Bishop had the Latin *elevare* in his mind, which signifies to diminish, detract from, or extenuate. In some editions the word is altered by somebody who did not understand it, and instead of "*elevate*" is printed "*alleviate.*"*

In the same page he says, "St. John was listened to by king and people, by doctors and by IDIOTS, by Pharisees and Sadducees."

* Hooker, in his Ecclesiastical Politie, uses the same word in the same sense... "There are that *elevate* too much the ordinarie, &c. means." *Book* v. sect. 59.

A mere English reader will not fail to understand fools by idiots, and will conclude that the Bishop intended to say that St. John was attended to by wise men and fools. But as the Bishop means by the context to honor St. John, it is impossible to conceive that he would say, as a compliment to him, that he was listened to by *idiots* in the synonymous sense with *fools*. The truth is, that the Bishop had the Greek IDIOTAI in view, and only meant that St. John was listened to by all ranks and conditions, by the learned and the unlearned; for IDIOTAI signifies the common people, the vulgar herd, as distinguished from the learned, or people of condition.

A great multitude of instances might be produced from the same learned author: but these happened to occur while I was reading his admirable little treatise inserted in the fourth chapter and first book of the *Ductor Dubitantium*, entitled, An Instance of Moral Demonstration, or a Conjugation of Probabilities, proving that the Religion of Jesus Christ is from God. I advise my reader attentively to consider that excellent piece, not only as a most ingenious composition, but as exhibiting, in a striking point, many unanswerable arguments in favor of Christianity.

I beg leave to present him, as an inducement, with the following specimen, on the internal evidence of the divinity of Jesus Christ's Religion:

"It is a doctrine perfective of human nature, that teaches us to love God, and to love one another, to hurt no man, and to do good to every man; it *propines* to us the noblest, the highest, and the bravest pleasures of the world; the joys of charity, the rest of innocence, the peace of quiet spirits, the wealth of beneficence, and forbids us only to be beasts and to be devils; it allows all that God and nature intended, and only restrains the excrescencies of nature, and forbids us to take pleasure in that which is the only entertainment of devils, in murders and revenges, malice, and spiteful words and actions; it permits corporal pleasures where they can best minister to health and societies, to conversation of families, and honor of communities; it teaches men to keep their words, that themselves may be secured in all their just interests, and to do good to others that good may be done to them; it forbids biting one another, that we may not be devoured by one another; and commands obedience to superiors,

that we may not be ruined in confusions; it combines governments, and confirms all good laws, and makes peace, and opposes and prevents wars where they are not just, and where they are not necessary. It is a religion that is life and spirit, not consisting in ceremonies and external amusements, but in the services of the heart, and the real fruit of lips and hands, that is, of good words and good deeds; it bids us to do that to God which is agreeable to his excellencies, that is, worship him with the best thing we have, and make all things else minister to it; it bids us to do that to our neighbor by which he may be better; it is the perfection of the natural law, and agreeable to our natural necessities, and promotes our natural ends and designs; it does not destroy reason, but instructs it in very many things, and complies with it in all; it hath in it both *heat* and *light*, and is not more effectual than it is beauteous; it promises every thing that we can desire, and yet promises nothing but what it does effect; it proclaims war against all vices, and generally does command every virtue; it teaches us with ease to mortify those affections reason durst scarce reprove, because she hath not strength enough to conquer; and it does create in us those virtues which reason of herself never knew, and, after they are known, could never approve sufficiently. It is a doctrine in which nothing is superfluous or burdensome, nor yet is there any thing wanting which can procure happiness to mankind, or by which God can be glorified: and if wisdom, and mercy, and justice, and simplicity, and holiness, and purity, and meekness, and contentedness, and charity, be images of God and rays of divinity, then that doctrine in which all these shine so gloriously, and in which nothing else is ingredient, must needs be from God; and that all this is true in the doctrine of Jesus, needs no other probation but the reading of the words."

But to return to the subject on which this paper began; I venture to affirm that no man, however sensible and well informed in other respects, can understand *completely* the works of Taylor, Hooker, Milton, and many other most celebrated old English writers, without an accurate knowledge of Latin and Greek etymology. Yet alas! how many are bitter enemies to Latin and Greek, to whom, I am pretty sure, those languages never did any harm.

EVENING XLIV.

ON THE PRINTS IN PRAYER BOOKS, BIBLES, AND OTHER RELIGIOUS BOOKS.

THERE can be no doubt but that they who added prints to religious books, intended to assist the reader in raising in his mind clear and striking ideas of sacred things; but the artists they employed have commonly been so injudicious as to render figures of a most serious and solemn kind objects of derision.

All graphical representations of God the Father are to be disapproved; for, instead of exalting our idea of the Deity, they *elevate* (to use a word in the sense animadverted on in the preceding Evening) or lower it. In thinking of GOD, imagination forms an obscure but grand image of a sublime existence, ΚΥΔΕΙ ΓΑΙΩΝ, and the heart adores it; but the hand of the artist at once diminishes its grandeur, and divests it of its glory. Think of the great God of heaven and earth drawn by a painter under the figure of a little decrepit old man with a long beard, sitting in an elbow chair.

The Scripture introduces God speaking or appearing with terrific majesty. *The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of the Lord. Tremble thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob; which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters.* It belongs to injudicious limners and sculptors to render this *presence* familiar. Hayman has one or too designs for Newton's Milton, in which God is introduced; and in that which is prefixed to to the sixth book, the Deity appears terrible, and the artist has shewn great skill; but yet he could never equal imagination, and therefore his best efforts appear defective. Obscurity aggrandizes images of celestial beings; once delineate them on paper, and render the idea clear and determinate, and you put an end to the awe of the beholder.

I can easily understand, and readily admire, as a strong poetical figure, the touching of Isaiah's hallowed lips with fire; but I cannot admire the engraver's representation, in some Bibles, of an angel from heaven with a

blacksmith's tongs burning the poor prophet's lips with a live coal.

> Quodcumque ostendis mihi ad incredulus odi.
>
> Sunt aliquid tale and disbelieve. *Hor.*

There is a great analogy between poetry and painting; but yet poetry may represent many things with great vivacity and beauty which will not bear an exact delineation on paper or canvass, without a shocking *bathos*.

The representations of Satan, in many serious books, is so ridiculous, that one would almost imagine the artist intended to laugh at the idea of such a being. Who can bear some prints of demoniacs, where the possessed are exhibited vomiting up little black devils with cloven feet and long tails? If artists thought such figures likely to excite or preserve devotion, they must have been as weak as their admirers.

But as they have erred by familiarity, so also from ill-placed grandeur. The Nativity has ever been the favorite subject of painters. Truth required that they should exhibit a stable; but, in order to dignity so mean a place, they usually introduce a superb and fluted column of the Grecian architecture. The ox, the ass, and the manger, are faintly exhibited; but the grand pillar strikes the spectator with ideas of sumptuous magnificence. The birth of our Saviour in this humiliating place was intended to recommend humility by the force of example: but the painter comes, and, by a strange metamorphosis, converts the stable to a gorgeous palace. The artifice intended to raise veneration causes contempt, and the apparent falsehood is highly indecent when it obtrudes itself among the pages of a Holy Bible.

Few books have had a greater popularity than the works of Bishop Taylor. Several of them are adorned with good plates by Faithorne; but disgraced by others of a ridiculous kind. The frontispiece to the *Rules of holy dying* cannot but excite mirth even in those who do not habitually sit in the seat of the scorner. On one side is the statue of a clergyman in his canonicals, with the inscription on the base, *Mercurius Christianus*. In the clouds, opposite to him, is the figure of an old man, with a flag in one hand and a crown in the other, in a sitting posture, intended to represent Jesus Christ. My reader

will immediately see the absurdity of introducing *Mercurius* in the same picture with our Saviour. On the other side is represented, in a most childish manner, hell and the devil. Here the figures are shockingly deformed; but they are calculated to strike terror into none but children, and those who labor under the weakest superstition. The book, in many parts, is excellent, and has been read by the devout with great edification. It is to be regretted that it was deformed by such a picture, which appears to be dictated by folly, which is ludicrous in the eyes of every sensible observer, and which might have been dispensed with;

.... possit duci quia sine istis.
Because we can do without them. *Hor.*

The prints inserted in the Common Prayer Books are of a kind which none but the ignorant and vulgar can admire; and even they can receive no advantage from them. Such persons may be diverted by them from devotion, instead of being guided to it, or animated in it. The cut entitled, Jesus tempted by the Devil, is almost as ludicrous as if it had come from Hogarth or Bunbury. The devil has a crown and sceptre, a modern coat, apparently a pair of boots, and from his rump hangs a tail resembling what is called a pig-tail.

Endeavors to represent the Trinity by a triangle with a dove in the centre, might be spared. The miraculous gift of tongues has been lowered in the reader's conception by the painter's art. In most sculptures angels are too much familiarized to be revered.

In Sparke's Feasts and Fasts there is an engraving to represent our Saviour's passion. He is drawn praying in the garden, and supposed to be saying—*Father, if thou wilt, take this* CUP *from me*, &c. *And there appeared an angel from heaven comforting him.* The cup in this place is evidently a figurative expression; but the artist represents an angel actually reaching out of the clouds a real cup, in the form of a common drinking glass or rummer, and handing it in the attitude of a tavern-waiter holding out a goblet of wine.

Nelson's Festivals is an excellent book, and a great favorite with all the devout. I am concerned that it should be disgraced by two paltry plates, as frontispieces, which lessen the reverence due to the whole subject. On the

back ground of one are our Saviour and Satan
mountain. Satan is represented with a tail, as usual
if he had not wings, would present the idea of a cat
ing upon her hinder legs. It is improbable th
Christian can be delighted or improved by such fi
but it is certain, that many may be offended by
and lose that veneration for sacred things, whic
favorable to their virtue and their peace.

By inspecting popular books of devotion, many
absurd prints might easily be pointed out; but I
not to increase the ridicule. I wish all such disg
prints could be torn out and committed to the
What an idea must a Mahometan or a sensible
entertain of Christianity, when he sees such silly fig
books sanctioned by the most awful authority?

I know it will be said that such prints are intende
for weak brethren and sisters, for children, and ol
and women in their dotage. Perhaps this is tru
others unavoidably see them, and they suggest a
lous idea on sacred subjects, not easily to be ba
when once admitted. He who has so far divested
of natural awe as to laugh at what is venerable, w
without a greater effort than most men are willing to
raise in his mind a due degree of repect, in the cont
tion of heaven itself and its almighty King.

The greatest painters, whom the world has ye
have shewn that they were able to represent sacre
jects, not only without lowering them, but with gr
dition to their inherent sublimity. They chose grai
jects, and their genius expanded to grasp the mag
Such, and such only, may be imitated by the littl
who draw for common books of devotion; but I t
would be a good rule, never to represent either th
omnipotent, or the Evil Spirit, embodied. Painters
not deviate into heathenism by confounding Jehov
Jupiter, or Satan with Pluto. What mortal han
presume to paint Him in a mortal form and a n
vestment, who is diffused over all space, and who
himself with light as with a garment?

Let the limner practise an excellent rule sugges
Horace for the poet:

Quæ desperat tractata nitescere posse relinquat,

The subject which he cannot adorn, let him pruder
cline

EVENING XLV.

ON THE SAFETY AND HAPPINESS OF A LIFE OF OBSCURITY.

THE choice of Hercules, and other pieces of a similar tendency to be found among the ancient moralists, were a beautiful and efficacious mode of conveying a fine moral lesson. They powerfully stimulated the minds of young persons to neglect the blandishments of vice, and to follow virtue over the rugged steep that leads to glory. Hercules made an honorable choice; and his example was intended to fire the soul with emulative ardor.

Ambition, like his, is useful, as it calls for those fine exertions which contribute to meliorate the condition of man, to improve all that providence has allotted him, to perfect art, and to adorn society. Happy it is for the public that man is so formed as, for the sake of fame, to relinquish ease, and devote his time, his health, and his life, to labors, which, while they dignify himself, enrich, embellish, and aggrandize an empire.

And great is the pleasure attendant on exertion, and sweet the reward of applauding fellow-creatures, when the exertion is virtuous and successful.

Magnum iter intendo; sed dat mihi gloria vires.

But there is a great deal of unsuccessful exertion in pursuit of fame, and many, after sowing in pain and labor, reap only a harvest of disappointment.

For the sake of these and of others, who find not opportunities to distinguish themselves, it is useful to suggest consolatory topics; such as point out the pains and penalties of fame, and the ease and pleasure of a life led in retirement. Nor is it fair to attribute whatever is said on this side of the question to the same motive which induced the fox to exclaim, that the grapes were sour. There are certainly a thousand solid comforts to be enjoyed in a state of obscurity, which are bartered for the flattering distinction of popular applause.

He who is laboring to emerge from obscurity, and whose mottos are the spirited passages of Virgil,

....tentanda via est, qua, me quoque possum
Tollere humo, victorque virum volitare per ora....
....aliquid jamdudum invadere magnum
Mens agitat mihi nec placidam contenta quiete est,
Virg.

immediately draws upon himself the watchful eyes of competition. His equals, over whom he attempts to rise, shoot at him from the ground the shafts of envy, and those who have already risen, assail him from the turret with the missile weapons of jealousy. The success and final result of his attempts are doubtful; but, in the mean time, the wounds and arrows of outrageous enemies are sensibly felt, and often inflict on his peace a wound that admits no cure.

When a man is once rendered conspicuous, once become the subject of conversation, not only those who envy his distinction, but those who, from want of sense or of knowledge, misunderstand his conduct or mistake his meaning, employ themselves by secret influence or open enmity, to bring him down to their own level.

The greatest excellence is the most likely to be misunderstood; for few are qualified to be competent judges of singular pre-eminence. It is a just opinion, that they who would form a sound judgment in learning, in arts, or in life, of an exalted degree of perfection, must themselves possess it, and be able, while they give the criticism, to furnish the example.

From the malice of envy, the mistakes of ignorance, the levity of thoughtlessness, it is impossible that he who is lifted up and become a mark, should not frequently be wounded with a poisoned arrow. If he has sensibility, his condition must be painful though it may be exalted. Like the traveller on the bleak hill, he must bide the pelting of the pitiless storm, and envy the shepherd in the vale his hovel and his cot.

It is a trite remark, that the smallest specks are most visible in the whitest raiment. The common infirmities of human nature, arising from bodily sickness or momentary ill-temper, are noticed in conspicuous characters, and exaggerated by malicious ingenuity. They are remembered long, and perhaps never forgotten. In a *common man*, who would have taken notice of such peccadil-

loes as are handed to posterity of Samuel Johnson? The little infirmities of the man have given such offence, as to prejudice many against the writer.

But the votary of fame will not be troubled with externals only. He has within him a restless spirit which suffers not his eyelids to close, in the soft hours when unambitious mortals enjoy the sweetest slumber; and while others taste the delight of oblivious slumber,

———Νηδυμον υπνον.———

Μαλακω δεδμημενοι υπνω,———

of him it may be said, he must not spend the night in sleep,

——— ου χρη παννυχιον ευδειν.

A state of such solicitude cannot but lose many solid satisfactions, though it should be allowed, as is indeed true, that the alternate excitation of hope and fear, is attended with considerable delight, in consequence of the exercise it affords to the animal spirits and to the imagination.

It were easy to add on this subject, an abundance of common-place remarks on ambition, glory, vanity, fame, ease, retirement; but this kind of common place, which every one allows to be true and solid, every one neglects, because, like the sun, it is self-evident and familiar. I wish to draw my reflections from real observations on life;

Respicere exemplar vitæ et veras hinc ducere voces. *Hor.*

From real observation then I am able to pronounce, that persons who live in their families a regular and temperate life, performing their relative, social, and religious duties, appear to enjoy more tranquillity and self-possession, than the various tribes that are struggling to emerge from the level on which their birth and circumstances have placed them. Such as these, ever restless, taste not the pleasures of repose; and as the desires of ambition, like those of avarice, increase with possession, they are strangers, as long as they live, to contentment, the sweetest ingredient of life.

When it is considered, that besides the certainty of im-

curring slander and misrepresentation, of feeling much uneasiness, and of foregoing many most desirable comforts, the ambitious are also in danger of infamy where they expected fame, and contempt where they demanded honor, they will, it is to be hoped, repress their ardor, and learn to seek enjoyment in governing themselves and their families according to wisdom and justice. And let them not think that the public service is deserted by them; for when every man, according to the Scripture rule, studies to be quiet, and to mind his own business, the public will be better served than by the officious interference of pragmatical activity.

Though the favor and applause of men may gratify vanity, and promote pecuniary interest for a few years, yet of how little value will they appear at the close of life? Men know but little of each other's real character and merit, and frequently err by undervaluing and overvaluing them. They have often lavished fame and glory on the undeserving, and denied them, at least during life, to their greatest benefactors.

Milton had very little reputation as a poet while alive. And as to posthumous fame,

Si post fata venit gloria, sera venit.

Churchill had a thousand times more popularity while he lived than Milton. He owed his popularity to politics. These interested the factions of the times. Milton's age was indeed factious and turbulent enough; but he did not write political poetry. And the violent partizans of his time cared little for old Adam and Eve, and the blissful scenes of Eden's Garden.

Men are so apt to envy, to err, and to be ungrateful, that a wise man will take care, if possible, not to let the fabric of his happiness rest on a pillar so tottering as the people's favor. He will endeavor to do good and to act reasonably, and leave popularity to follow her own caprice, and not let it be said of him, that his health and happiness depend on applause or the want of it.

Palma negata macrum, donata reducit opimum. *Hor.*

It is the great business of Christians to rise above the world, to do right actions, not as men pleasers, but unto God and their own consciences; and happy they who

quietly walk in their pilgrimage through this world through the vale of peace, neither pursuing fame, nor declining it when it comes as the temporal reward of goodness, but looking for approbation to him who seeth the heart, and whose approbation is the only true glory.

But even here man must be on his guard against vainglory; for many have appeared to be religious, and to despise glory, who were anxiously seeking it, deceiving themselves and others. *Sæpe homo*, says St. Austin, *de vanæ gloræ contemptu, vanius gloriatur.*

EVENING XLVI.

ON PREJUDICES AGAINST RELIGIOUS BOOKS.

I HOPE my readers will not think that I deviate into an uninteresting subject, when in the course of the Winter Evenings, I am sometimes led to consider that which is the business of every man, and far more important than the finest disquisitions in Science, Ethics, Arts and the Belles' Lettres:

.....id, quod
Æque pauperibus prodest, locupletibus æque,
Æque, neglectum, pueris senibusque nocebit. *Hor.*

The solemn stillness of a solitary *Winter Evening*, naturally leads to the contemplation of religion. Indeed, a subject in which all men are at all times deeply concerned, can never be unseasonable.

I am sorry to observe, that such subjects should be considered as dull. But I was surprized a little while ago, on mentioning my design to touch on religious topics, to hear from a sensible man, that he wished I would not, as I might depend upon it, my book would be more generally acceptable if religious topics were entirely excluded. "If you write a religious book," he said, "you must expect few readers but old women with their spectacles; you will stand no chance of getting rid of the copies, unless the Societies for promoting religious knowledge, and for the propagation of the Gospel, should think proper to give them away."

This prejudice against religious books, which I fear is

[illegible] prevalent among those who call themselves men of pleasure, gallery and fashion, is very unfortunate, as it tends to cut off some of the opportunities of deriving a knowledge of that, which, through ignorance alone, they rashly despise.

Indeed it must be acknowledged, that in the great abundance of religious books, for which this country is remarkable, there are many which rather injure the cause which they were written to advance. They were perhaps only written for a particular sect or persuasion, and when they fall into the hands of those who are not attached to any party, but judge from their own reason and unbiassed sentiments, they excite ideas unfavorable to religion in general. A poor style, wretched arguments, cant, hypocrisy, fanaticism, will give a disgust to the sober-minded; and much more to those who are little inclined to serious ideas, however well recommended by a polished style, and a dispassionate appeal to reason.

Yet such books may perhaps produce a good effect among those classes for whom they were intended, though they appear to persons of education, replete with gross absurdity. They are not therefore to be utterly despised, though they may be neglected; and it is unfair and ill-judged to form an idea of all religion and all religious treatises from the zealous but poor attempts of an illiterate bigot. It is like forming a judgment of all poetry from the works of Blackmore. Though, be it always remembered, that the disciples were poor fishermen, that religion may be understood without critical erudition; and that many a good man without learning has comprehended the vital and essential parts of religion, *the religion of the heart*, better than the most learned professor of theology in the most celebrated university. While the one was inspecting dictionaries, the other was examining his own bosom; while the one was toiling at languages, the other was engaged in labors of love.

There are in the English language great numbers of religious books, which cannot fall under the censure of absurdity, but are at once rational and beautiful. I wish my reader to enter on the study of religion by reading them, and he will afterwards relish real piety wherever he finds it, even though it should appear in a style of rude simplicity.

But many fashionable freethinkers are much conversant in polite and classical authors; and to pass from them to some of the simple works of mere devotees, is too violent a transition. It is for that reason that I recommend to them the sermons of the best writers; and hope they will not be so far prejudiced against them as to condemn them unexamined.

After a taste shall have been formed for religious subjects from the works of Addison, Hooker, Hammond, Taylor, Grotius, Bishop Bull, Dr. Lardner, Locke, Clarke, and all the sermon writers of the first class, the mind will learn to take a pleasure even in those books of humble piety, where the excellence of the thoughts and doctrines must shine by its own lustre, unadorned with the graces of language.

It is natural to suppose, that human inquiry will be most willingly conversant on the most important subjects. Life, death, and immortality, have in them an inherent importance, in comparison with which all other things appear like dust in the balance. There are consequently more books, I believe, in divinity than in any other department of literature.

But can I, after so many and so valuable labors, add any thing useful? I fear not; yet as religion is a subject that must frequently be considered by all who think with seriousness, I have also frequently considered it, and shall beg leave sometimes to write my thoughts of it with that humility which becomes all men, and which perhaps may be particularly required in me.

I am struck with awe at the very subject. A poor frail mortal sits down to examine the works and words of his omnipotent Maker. If he should mistake in his conclusions, he may offend God, and lead others into dangerous temptation.

But he is encouraged by example. He is encouraged by the authority which commissions many to expound the Scriptures, and to teach the people. And if errors are errors of judgment only, unaccompanied with presumption, there is every reason to believe them venial.

General prejudices against religious writings are highly unreasonable; for what is religion but moral philosophy under a higher sanction than the best human reason could

give it; what but the best efforts of human reason, controlled and directed by the will of God?

And can it be illiberal, narrow, unphilosophical, or in any respect unworthy of the most exalted of the human race, to study this will of God? to trace the beams of celestial light wherever the least glimmering appears in this darkling vale?

The study of divinity, or Christian philosophy, is a sublime employment of our faculties worthy of the greatest philosophers. What are mathematics, languages, arts, to the contemplation of the great fountain of all knowledge, of all beauty, of all excellence, the Father of Lights?

Totally to neglect the topics of religion in my Winter Evenings, would, I think, be a culpable omission; and I hope few readers are so little attentive to their chief concern as to think whatever is said on that subject, however imperfectly, destitute of interest.

After so much has been written in this country by the heroes of Christianity, I can indeed hope to add but little; but if I only turn the attention of a few to the subject, the attempt will not be useless; and what pleasure arising from polite letters and classical knowledge can equal that of seeking for one's self, and shewing to others, the THINGS THAT BELONG UNTO PEACE?

EVENING XLVII.

ON THE CHARACTER OF A PARISH PRIEST

IN the estimation of reason, few, if any, employments are more honorable than that of the pastor of a parish, the true Shepherd of his people. It is the business of his life to diffuse happiness and knowledge. His own wants, and those of his family, require some regard to pecuniary emolument, and justify an endeavor to obtain a competency; but his attention to lucre is but secondary and subordinate. His professional employment, and the purpose of his life, is the communication of happiness and knowledge: a most honorable profession, to be seeking *wisdom* at the fountain, and to be dispensing it liberally *to all who* ask for it.

I am speaking of the profession, not of the professors. I am aware that many a satirical tongue will be ready to detract from them, when compared to the profession in theory, and to exaggerate in them those human frailties which in others they would palliate. But even when I descend from the profession to the professors, I think I may affirm, that in no rank of society are more respectable members to be found than in the clerical. They ought, it will be said, to be superior in learning and virtue to others, as the master should excel his scholars, and as their studies and education tend to the advancement of human excellence to its highest perfection. Human frailty excepted, they have been, and often are, what they ought to be, in the eye of reasonable expectation. It is not possible to satisfy the demands of fanaticism, puritanism, and enthusiasm.

Dr. John Burton, a well-known classical scholar, seems to have viewed the character of a parish priest with singular admiration. He frequently speaks of it with a degree of rapture. The following passage from his *Sacerdos Parœcialis* is pleasing:

O felix studii, qui non ingloria ruris
Otia tutus agit, procul ambitio e metuque!
Qui recolens quicquid dignum sapiente bonoque
Providus æternæ meditatur seria vitæ.
Gaudia despiciens peritura; Deoque vocanti,
Cujus sacra gerit, magno lætatus honore,
Impendit curas, animamque relinquit in astris.
Non illum potuit Syren, damnosa voluptus,
Flectere, non miseros agitans discordia civis,
Nec malesuadus honos, nec lucri prava cupido;
Sed pietas, cœlumque Fides amplexa, remotum
Ad majora vocat; fortunam dona ferentem
Subjiciens pedibus rigidique pericula sati,
Atque alio patriam monstrans sub sole jacentem.
Felix qui, late turbantibus æquora ventis,
Civiles tuta prospectat ab arce tumultus,
Immunis culpæ, simul immunisque periculi!
Cætera securus sancto vacat usque labori
Sedulus et populo prodesse Deoque placere.

He proceeds to exemplify the character by the instances of Bernard Gilpin, Hooker, Herbert, and Hales. To these a long list of men might be added, of whom it is doubtful whether they had not acquired a participation of an angelic perfection even in this low abode. They seem to have been sent by Providence as models of excellence, to shew at what height human nature can arrive by

its virtuous efforts, assisted with divine grace, no standing its inherent weakness and corruption.

Many parish priests no less exemplary than these died unknown,

.....caruerunt quia vate sacro.....

Multitudes who lived in the practice of every Chr virtue, and died in the faith, truly saints, if any r can possess that title, now sleep in peace, with no over their graves but the green-sword. In the estim of heaven, it is probable that they were deemed worthy of a mausoleum that kings and conquerors.

As a tree is known by its fruits, let Christianity be by the virtuous men it has produced. I do not thin the most celebrated philosophers among the hea have equalled the virtue of many parish-priests, spent their days in the uniform practice of piety an nevolence; of many whose lives are accurately reco and of thousands more who lived and died in the obs which they loved, in the low-roofed vicarage of son que tered hamlet.

But objectors are inclined to complain that the lab the parish priest are not often attended with any rea able effect; that parishes continue profligate notwith ing the preaching and example of the most pious learned incumbent. Profligate they may be, it is notwithstanding these advantages; yet is it not reaso to believe that they would be more profligate wi them?

But that the clergy may possess all that weight to w their characters, their instructions, and their service title them, it is necessary that the richer and higher o in their parishes should set an example of paying the spect, and co-operate with them in securing, as far as possible, a regular and decent observation of the L day, and of all holy ordinances.

The great requisite is, to give the clergyman of the rish AUTHORITY. But the rustic esquire and p proud yeoman are often jealous of his influence, and stead of augmenting, are usually ready to diminish power by vexatious opposition. They form a part *carry every* point against him in the vestry; little c *dering*, that, in lowering the persona ecclesiæ, or the

son (which was once a name of respect), they contribute to destroy the subordination of society, and to lessen themselves in the eyes of their inferiors. The clergy and gentry should mutually and cordially assist each other in promoting good morals, good order, and every thing conducive to social peace, to virtue in high life, and to humble industry.

These are not times in which ecclesiastics unassisted by the laity can do much towards the reformation of the public. They were once viewed with a reverence which secured obedience to their exhortations; but this was before the general prevalence of infidelity. The meanest of the vulgar have now learned to talk of the national religion as a mode of superstition, and to despise its ministers, especially when a demand is made on their property. I have seen low persons who revenged the exaction of tithes, not only on the rectors and vicars, but on the Church, on the Christian religion, and on the Bible.

Those among the inferior ranks, who still retain a reverence for religion, are too often seduced by enthusiasts from the parish church, and endeavor to evince their zeal and attachment to their self-appointed pastors, by professing a contempt, if not a hatred, for the regular minister of the parish. His endeavor to preserve the dignity of his order is stigmatized as pride, his claim of his just dues as avarice, his rational style of preaching as the cold and languid performance of one who is laboring for hire, in an employment which he dislikes.

These opinions are disseminated with industry, and thus the lower part of the parish are soon divided into two parts, equally inclined to obstruct the beneficial operations of the minister, the sceptical and profligate on the one hand, and the enthusiastic on the other; unless therefore the better sort unite with him, and give him that power which is necessary to accomplish the purposes of his profession, he is in danger of being set at nought, and all his endeavors may be rendered ineffectual.

A clergyman has often a difficult part to act. The times are such, that all the richer and higher people of his parish, however vulgar their minds, affect to be people of fashion. They bring into the village the manners and amusements of the metropolis. If, on one hand, he refuses to join in them, he is an unwelcome visitor among

the rich; and if, on the other, he is seen too much engaged in them, he is despised by the poor.

The rich should allow him to be a little singular and reserved, without thinking him disagreeable or unfashionable. He is a public character, and stands connected with all the parish, of whatever degree, in a very intimate and important relation. It is his duty to serve both rich and poor, and in making himself agreeable to one, he must not so far forget the other as to neglect his duty and to give offence. But nothing in clergymen gives greater offence to the poor than *avoir du monde.*

Whether the parochial minister possess the graceful and polite accomplishments or not, the rich parishioners should make it a point to support him with their countenance, in all the duties of his office. This support of the richer parishioners appears to me to be the principal thing wanted to render the clergy efficient in promoting the great purposes of their salutary institution.

EVENING XLVIII.

ON THE BENEFICIAL EFFECTS OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

IN this free country a strict plan of police cannot easily be established and carried into complete execution. Preventive measures and summary proceedings would often infringe that liberty which is an Englishman's glory. The consequence is, that capital punishments are more frequent here than in absolute governments.

But capital punishments, though shocking in their nature, and conducted so as to strike terror, are yet found experimentally insufficient to promote a general reformation. They cut down the tree that bears evil fruit; but it would be a more successful method to graft the stock with a more generous cion. If it is possible to meliorate the root, the tree that would otherwise have only cumbered the ground, will in time mature its beautiful blossoms to clusters of fruit equally useful and delicious.

But in what manner shall the reformation begin? Old offenders may be sometimes restrained by fear, but seldom

admit an entire renovation. The experiment therefore must chiefly be made on the young and susceptible.

The children of the rich are usually educated with considerable expence. Whether the methods in which they are trained are the best that could be contrived or not, it is certain that the rich cannot, from their state of independence, fall under the regulation of the charitable. Poor children then are the objects on which charity must exert herself in her endeavors to effect a national reform.

The majority of every nation must of necessity consist of the poor: and if the majority can be improved, there is great reason to suppose that many in the minority will receive benefit from the example; and that, upon the whole, so much good will be produced as may be said to meliorate the morals of a whole people.

Charity-schools were established with this laudable intention; and, though many plausible objections have been made to them, yet there is reason to think that, as far as they extended, they contributed considerably to the accomplishment of their original purpose. But though they are numerous, they are by no means universal; and, on their present plan, they cannot possibly comprehend all the poor children of a populous parish.

To supply their defects, and to serve many most desirable purposes, Mr. Raikes of Gloucester, has instituted Sunday Schools. To the honor of the age, his example has been eagerly followed. The plan is at present only in its infancy. Time and experience can alone shew, in a full and infallible light, its real utility. It is proper, however, to render it an object of general attention, that it may have the advantage of a fair trial. They who know how much time is necessary for the instruction of children, will entertain doubts whether an hour or two, after an intermission of six days, will be sufficient for any great purpose, and whether the little that is then learned will not be obliterated from the memory by the natural effect of time, and the intervention of a variety of objects which have no relation to the Sunday's lesson. Children who go to school spend seven or eight hours every day in the week, for a year or two, before they learn to read with habitual facility.

This cannot be denied; but then it should be considered *that the superintendent* may set a short task to be learn-

ed in the course of the week, such as the child can attend to with advantage, under the eye of the parents, who, though they should not be able to read, may yet, by their authority, take care that the child looks into its book during half an hour every evening, when the daily labor is concluded. Without the co-operation of parental authority, I fear little will be done; with it, there is a chance that something may; and the parents themselves will derive some benefit, by virtuously endeavoring, according to the best of their power, to promote their children's improvement. If the parents can read, and are duly desirous of serving their children, they may instruct them according to the method prescribed by the teacher, and the Sunday attendance may be considered as a probationary exercise or public examination.

But if the child should not learn to read, he may yet learn something more valuable. He may learn the principles of religion, and moral honesty. He may learn to say proper prayers, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Catechism, by rote, and frequent repetition; and they who know the extreme ignorance of children in the lowest rank, will not deem these contemptible acquisitions. They are such as may have a good effect on the whole lives of the laboring part of mankind, save them from many errors and crimes, and at the same time conduce to promote a spirit of piety, and a due degree of obedience to law and authority.

Christianity may certainly be understood to all the purposes of salvation without much learning; and perhaps, the honest laborer, who receives the plain instruction of the Sunday schoolmaster, and treasures it in his heart, and acts up to the little knowledge he possesses with firm faith and true humility, is a better Christian than the learned theologist who disputes with all the pride of syllogistic skill, and the malice of polemic strife, in the schools of divinity. Compare the child who has learned only his Catechism, to the mere vagabond, or the wretched pick-pocket in London streets, who scarcely ever heard the name of God or Jesus Christ, but in an oath or execration, who imbibes the arts of villainy from his cradle, and dies by the gibbet at eighteen.

Although children should learn nothing, in consequence of the shortness of the time devoted to instruction, and

the distant intervals of it, yet it is certain, that during those hours which are the most dangerous in the week, they are kept from bad practices, and the contagion of bad examples. If they were not confined, and under the master's eye, they would be in the streets in the purlieus of the town, in the church-yard, gaming for halfpence, quarrelling, fighting, and practising every vice of which their age is capable, and which opportunities allow.

Perhaps when children are industriously and soberly brought up by their parents, and employed in sedentary manufactures during the whole week, it may be injurious to health, and quite unnecessary, to confine and employ them on the day which God intended for their rest and refreshment. It is cruelty in such a case to prevent them from enjoying air and exercise.

Indeed the institution appears to me to be most properly confined to the very lowest of the people, those who are almost vagrants, and who have scarcely a friend to assist them. The children of poor and laborious people are usually sent at their own expence to petty schools, and brought up as decently as can reasonably be required; and to confine such as these on Sunday evenings, or to unite them even at school with the idle and vagabond, may possibly do them more injury than service.

The benefit to be derived from Sunday schools, even to the proper object of the charity, must in every place depend greatly on the schoolmaster; and I fear the stipend usually paid is such as will not engage, after the novelty is worn off, such persons as are likely to secure attention and obedience by their wisdom or authority. Parents, will not suffer a master of a degree as low as their own, to punish, in an exemplary manner, or to dictate with a decisive air to their children. Great obstacles may often arise to this institution from the pride and obstinacy of parents in low life.

But the design is generous, and it may produce greater good than many apprehend. It may contribute to preserve Christianity among us in its due vigor. It may rescue many from a wretched life, an ignominious death, and worse consequences in futurity.

Whatever doubts the cold and cautious may entertain, and sanguine zeal which its promoters display does them

honor as men and Christians, and will have its reward. Whatever has so many promising appearances of being able to do great good, as the establishment of Sunday Schools, ought certainly to have a trial, and not to be rejected, till the fullest experience shall have proved it ineffectual or impracticable.

The rich have so many advantages, both for enjoyment of life and the improvement of their talents, that, in gratitude for them, they ought to contribute whatever they can to the comfort and instruction of the child of poverty. Christianity teaches us to think, that the giver of all good gifts will consider this as a grateful return to him; and experience proves, that the improvement of the poor in *good morals* contributes greatly to the security and accommodation of the opulent.

I am afraid indeed, the same experience proves also, that the poor are not always made better servants, better subjects, or happier in themselves, by the little and superficial *school-attainments* which enable them to read novels, instead of the Bible; and to write love letters, instead of keeping accounts and regulating their œconomy. But still no man has a right to deny them the means of improvement. The light of the sun may afford opportunity for villainous and mischievous actions, but what mortal shall presume to veil it from his fellow mortals, even if it were possible?

EVENING XLIX.

ON THE CHARACTER OF LORD LYTTELTON.

THOUGH the first Lord Lyttelton was not of a very vigorous mind, yet, upon a review of his life and works, he appears to deserve a greater share of esteem, than many are disposed to allow him. He is spoken of in the Biographical prefaces to the English Poets, with that faint praise, which amounts to contemptuous censure. But in this circumstance, he is on a level with some of the first writers and best men whom the annals of English literature have recorded. All eminent writers who were contemporaries with Johnson, were seen by him through a medium which gave an unnatural tinge to their complexions, and distorted their real shape.

Lyttelton's intellects, compared with those of his censorial biographer. were, I think, feeble. On such a comparison, he appears but as a lamb to a lion. Johnson, in the consciousness of his strength, might have allowed Lyttelton great merit, without feeling the least propensity to invidious detraction. Posterity, if not the present age, will place them both in the rank they respectively deserve. Their own decisions concerning each other, will avail but little.

I wish to wave a comparison in which Lyttelton will ever appear greatly inferior. I chuse rather to consider his absolute merit, both as a writer and as a man. In both these characters, considering all circumstances, he will appear worthy of national esteem; and I am the more desirous of supporting his character, because I consider him as furnishing an excellent example to young and ingenious noblemen who often err by the bad models which they are accustomed to behold and taught to admire.

The juvenile compositions of Lyttelton, are to be considered merely as exercises voluntarily performed by a well-disposed young man, for the sake of his improvement in style. His observations on the life of Cicero, considered in this light, are certainly entitled to esteem, though they fall below the style and ingenuity of Middleton; from whose Biographical work, however, it has lately been the fashion, very unjustly, to detract the merit that was once allowed them. The other little pieces placed at the beginning of Lyttelton's Works, are to be viewed only as prolusions and trials of skill, very meritorious, as the amusement of a man of quality, though by no means worthy of being praised as master-pieces of composition. But surely it was great virtue in Lyttelton to spend his youth in such employment, while those of his age, rank, and prospects, were usually engaged in all the follies and vices of vain-glorious dissipation.

The Persian Letters do not exceed mediocrity. The plan, though by no means novel, afforded scope for wit, humor, and ingenious satire. But there is little in the Persian Letters, which a man of common abilities and common observation could not have produced. The book, however, has been popular among the young and superficial; though the observations in it are so trite and

obvious, as not to attach the minds of those who are deeply read either in learning or in life.

The Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul, are so excellent in their design, and so able in the execution, that they entitle the author to a high rank among those writers whom I call the lay-divines of this country. I think Lyttelton's genius was formed for divinity; and I cannot but wish that he had taken orders, and become Archbishop of Canterbury. The church would have found in him an able advocate with his pen, and a shining ornament by his example. Dr. Johnson, always a zealous friend to religion, does justice to the Observations on St. Paul, by saying of them, that they form a treatise to which infidelity has never been able to fabricate a specious answer.

Such advocates for the faith as Lord Lyttelton, always carry great weight, exclusively of the intrinsic force of their arguments; because they are supposed to be free from professional prejudice, and the bias of temporal advantage. Locke, Addison, Nelson, West, and Lyttelton, are volunteers in the church militant, whose prowess excited by principle alone, and arising from conviction of a righteous cause, entitles them to be considered among the most glorious soldiers of Jesus Christ. If Lyttelton had written nothing else but the Observations on St. Paul's Conversion, his fame would have been founded on a firmer basis than it stands upon at present. That foundation is of marble. Some of his other works are formed of too slight and perishable materials to support a fabric designed for posterity.

The dialogues of the dead have been much celebrated; but inclined as I am to favor the reputation of their author, I cannot help agreeing with the judicious critics who think that they are too little labored; and that they are such as a man of moderate abilities and reading might have written without much study. They have neither the wit of Lucian, the grace of Fontenelle, nor the fleeid beauties of Fenelon. Like the Persian Letters, they appear to be best calculated for the young and superficial. The three Dialogues by that highly accomplished lady, Mrs. Montagu, have, I think, more spirit than any in the collection.

The parliamentary speeches exhibit little to interest

the reader, since the questions which gave rise to them have ceased to be controverted. They cannot be classed with the remains of ancient eloquence. They have nothing to be blamed, nor much to be commended. They display marks of an honest and good mind, which the old rhetoricians have said is the first quality of an orator, and they betray no want of competent ability.

The Biographical Prefacer has given no opinion of the History of Henry the second. He has confined his narrative to the recital of a few trifling circumstances attending the publication of it; such as argue an excess of timidity in the historian, concerning the reception of his book; but such as do not effect the merits of the history, any otherwise, than as they seem to imply some degree of weakness in the mind of the author.

As Johnson says nothing of this book, it is probable that he had not read it; and indeed it is rather uninviting to classical scholars, however it may please the antiquary. It is however greatly labored. There is an abundance of matter, the result of curious research. But the style, though clear and easy, is not animated with the Roman spirit, nor elevated with classical dignity. It is, therefore, not much read by those who read for other pleasure besides that which arises from historical information. It is, however, intrinsically valuable; and becomes more estimable, when considered as the voluminous production of a man in that rank of life which is exposed to all the temptations of indolence, if not to those of vicious extravagance. Such a history from any man would have been highly respectable; but from an opulent peer, and a man of fashion, it affords so good an example to the great, that it ought to be commended with every praise that does not amount to an unjust and adulatory encomium. It is the work of a man of sense and parts, if not of great genius; it is the work of a good man and a patriot, endeavoring to diffuse the love of virtue and of liberty. I imagined it to be the work, on which the author desired to build that fame which was to descend to future ages. He meant it as a monument durable as brass; but I doubt whether it will stand against the attacks of time.

The Poems of Lord Lyttelton are, for the most part, merely the juvenile amusements of a polished mind, enjoying, and improving the happy opportunities of a

learned leisure. Though they reach not sublimity of excellence, they display a sufficient degree of beauty to prove that their Author could have done better, if he had applied the whole force of his mind to them, and if he had made poetry his study rather than his idle diversion. They have been much read, and are still favorites among those who admire the mild efforts of the gentle muse. To judge of their merits fairly, a reader should consider the poetry that preceded, rather than that which has been subsequent to them. They have however a smoothness of versification, and a tenderness of sentiment, which must please the ear and the heart. Those who are in search of deep pathos and exalted grandeur, must have recourse to the Miltons and Shakspeares; but those who desire soft elegance, grace, and sentiment, will find what they wish for in the poetical play-things of Lord Lyttelton.

Having thus taken a transient view of the writer, I proceed to consider the man.

His youth appears to have been regular and virtuous, from the letters to his father, which are highly respectful; and in a style very different from that of the libertine, and the extravagant young man of fashion and quality. I think they bear internal evidence that he was a good son.

That he was a good husband, there is every reason to believe, from the sorrow which he felt at the loss of his first wife. She died after living with him five years, in a state of happiness, said to have been rarely exceeded in the nuptial state. "He solaced his grief," as Johnson rather slightingly observes, "by writing a long poem to her memory." That poem is certainly full of tender sentiment, and seems to have come immediately from the heart of a disconsolate and undissembling mourner. Johnson himself did not lament the loss of his Tetty, in a manner so pleasing, or which bore stronger marks of sincere affection.

The second marriage of Lord Lyttelton was not so productive of happiness as the first; but the cause is not, I believe, publicly recorded, if it is clearly ascertained.

That he was a kind and indulgent father, there is every reason to believe, though his son was imprudent and unfortunate.

In public life, he was a warm friend to liberty, an indefatigable man of business, a patron of letters, as ap-

pears in the instances of Mallet and Thomson, and in every respect a good citizen, actuated by generous, wise, and patriotic principles.

Considering the whole of his character, I may pronounce that he was an ornament to the peerage, and an honor to his age.

If Lord Lyttelton does not possess the very first rank among men, it is not through a defect of great virtues, noble principles, and philanthropic purposes; but from a want of that robust vigor, and that fervent ardor of genius, which nature must supply, and art can only direct and improve. Let him be compared as a peer, a patriot, a philosopher, and a man, to his celebrated contemporary, Lord Chesterfield. By the herd of worldlings and witlings, the preference will undoubtedly be given to Lord Chesterfield; but men of solid sense and enlarged views, men of good hearts, lovers of mankind more than lovers of vanity and sordid interest, will unite their suffrages in favor of Lord Lyttelton. They will ask, in reviewing them together, whose examples and precepts are most likely to be most beneficial to society, those of the tutor of dissimulation, or those of him who taught and practised what he taught, in spite of fashion and prejudice, the love of truth, virtue, and christianity? It would be an affront to mankind to offer a formal answer to this inquiry.

But there are many, among whom I am sorry to have been obliged to enumerate Johnson, who have derogated from the character of Lyttelton, by a disrespectful mention of his name, his writings, and his conduct. Johnson was influenced by some degree of jealousy to despise one, whom, as he wrote at the same time with himself, though in an inferior manner, he could not but consider as a rival in the contest for fame. Others are enemies to the memory of Lyttelton, for no other reason than because they are enemies to virtue. Such persons endeavor to throw contempt on his writing, by representing the author as weak and vain. If they faintly allow him to have been a good man, the concession is made with an expressive sneer. The detraction of persons who are themselves too deeply corrupted to see and admire the charms of a virtuous and religious character, deserves to be treated with that contempt, which they are endea-

voring to fix on a man deserving of honor: and every effort should be made to recommend such an example as Lyttelton's, to the rising generation of nobility, who should be taught, while they shun his weaknesses, to aspire at equalling and surpassing his moral and intellectual excellence.

EVENING L.

ON THE LITERARY CHARACTER OF JULIUS CÆSAR.

JULIUS CÆSAR, like the greater part of men distinguished by genius, began to display his inventive powers in the pleasant walks of poesy. In early youth he wrote a Tragedy called Œdipus, and the Praise of Hercules, which I imagine was a kind of epic poem; but Augustus prohibited the publication of them both, lest they should expose any marks of juvenile imperfection, and disgrace the imperial family. It should be mentioned also, as an instance of Julius Cæsar's industry, that he compiled a volume, to which he gave the name of *Dicta collectanea*, consisting of the remarkable apophthegms of remarkable men. Augustus suppressed this also, from a scrupulous regard for the honor of the house of Cæsar.

One cannot help wishing that the juvenile productions of so distinguished a man, had been preserved as curiosities. Though they might not have been exempt from the defects of immature judgment, there is every reason to conjecture that they abounded in elegance.

At a later period, this great man wrote a poem, entitled *Iter*, or the *Itinerary*. It gave an account of his expeditious progress from Rome to Hispania ulterior; and was probably in the style and manner of Horace's *Iter Brundusium*.

I am the rather induced to believe that Cæsar wrote in the Horatian manner *sermoni propriora*, because the little specimen which remains of Cæsar's poetry is in that style. It is the well-known fragment on Terence, preserved by Donatus.

Tu quoque, tu in summis, O dimidiate Menander, &c.

In the dialogue of an admirable author on the causes of the corruption of eloquence, there is a passage which reflects but little honor on Cæsar as a poet. Cæsar and Brutus, says he, wrote verses and deposited them in libraries; they did not make better verses than Cicero, but yet more happily, since fewer knew that they made them at all. *Non melius quam Cicero, at felicius, quia illos fecisse pauciores sciunt.*

Cæsar's verses, it is probable, were not very striking, as may be collected from an anecdote recorded of them by Plutarch. When Cæsar was taken by pirates, he solaced himself in his disagreeable situation, by composing orations and verses. He read his verses to his captors, hoping to receive the flattering tribute of their applause; but the hardy adventurers had no ear for verse. Cæsar gave way to momentary resentment, called them stupid barbarians, and declared that they deserved crucifixion. It cannot be supposed that he revenged the mortification his pride received, in a manner so tyrannical; but it is said that, as soon as he was liberated, he ordered the poor pirates to be nailed to the cross. Crucifixion, it is to be hoped, was a punishment for the want of honesty, and not of taste.

Notwithstanding this vindictive spirit, it would have been happy if this ambition had been poetical rather than political. It might have saved the deluge of blood through which he waded to empire. According to his own confession, the conquest of Gaul occasioned the loss of *one million two hundred thousand lives;* and it is supposed, that the civil wars in which he was engaged, destroyed an equal number. Dreadful effects of pride! Two millions four hundred thousand lives destroyed by one man! Remarkable instance of the instability of human grandeur! for he enjoyed the peaceable possession of his power only five months!

But the present business is to consider Cæsar in the light of a scholar, not as a soldier. If his character as a poet is disputable, his talents as an orator, and his learning and sagacity as a philosopher, are highly and justly esteemed. By a rare union of different abilities he excelled at once in the elegance of polite letters, and in the severer department of recondite science.

As an orator, Cicero places him in the first rank; and

Quintilian thinks he would have rivalled Cicero, had he devoted his abilities to the rostrum or tribunal. The elegance of his language was the peculiar excellence which distinguished him as an orator. He was more attic than Cicero; and if he had transmitted his best orations down to posterity, Cicero would not have stood alone at the head of Roman orators. Cicero himself generously extols him, and thinks him equal to those who had made the study of eloquence the business of their lives.

But eloquence was cultivated by Cæsar only in subservience to his ambition. He knew that the Triumviri, in the plenitude of their usurping power, could cut off the heads and hands of mere orators, and nail them to the rostrum. He knew, that though Cicero inculcated the doctrine that arms should yield to the gown, and the laurel to the tongue, it was the sword and the axe which, in his time, carried all before it.

Amidst all the turbulence of ambition, so extensive was his capacity, that he found both time and inclination to write two books addressed to Cicero, on the cool and dispassionate subjects of grammatical analogy. In the dedication, he paid Cicero a great compliment, though, if we may judge from his own conduct, it was insincere. He congratulated the orator on having obtained a laurel more honorable than all military triumph, as it was more glorious to extend the limits of the Roman genius, than of the empire.

Cæsar wrote two books in opposition to Cicero's *Laus Catonis*, in which Cato Uticensis had been celebrated with all the warmth of panegyric. Cæsar considered the praise of Cato as a reflection on himself, and published his answer in two orations, to which he gave the name, *Anti-Catones*.

The speeches were in the form of accusations before a judge; and, I believe, they were conducted with temper, for Cæsar praises Cato in the midst of his invective. He was too much master of his temper to suffer it to be indecently disturbed by critical controversy, and he was sufficiently politic to know, that to deny a merit which was become notorious, would injure the cause of which he had undertaken the defence.

One of the principal topics of Cæsar's satire was Cato's ebriety. But he relates an anecdote of it which re-

dounds to the honor of Cato's general character. Cato returning one morning from a convivial meeting, in a state of inebriation, was met by some young men, who were determined to see whom they had encountered. They uncovered his face, and found it Cato. They no sooner saw him than they blushed on their own account, for having taken such a liberty with so great a man. You would have imagined that they had been detected in an improper state by Cato, and not Cato by them; so great was their confusion: and hence it is evident, that in the midst of drunkenness, Cato's character was respectable, and retained the dignity of superior virtue. Cæsar could not have paid Cato a greater compliment, or allowed him more personal authority, than by relating this story, in which Cato, even when divested of his reason by excess, was yet an awful character.

I imagine Cæsar, in the liberality and urbanity of a cultivated mind, conducted this controversy in a good-humored manner, and rather more for the pleasure and amusement of it, than from a resentful desire to detract from Cato, whom his enemies allowed to be a good man and a good citizen. Every one knows that he was fond of wine; and Horace seems to think that his virtue, by which is meant his *manly* spirit, acquired warmth from the juice of the grape.

Narratur et prisci Catonis
Sæpe mero caluisse virtus.

The effect of Cæsar's knowledge in astronomy is felt at this hour, in the reformation of the Calendar. Cæsar is represented in Lucan, as saying of himself,

.....media inter prælia semper
Stellarum cœlique plagis superisque vacavi.

He was a lover of the science, and excelled in it; but there is reason to believe, that, in the Julian Calendar, he was assisted or directed by Sosigenes, the astronomer, who had derived his knowledge from the banks of the Nile. It is probable that superstition, and not ignorance only, prevented the reformation from taking place, before Cæsar gave it the sanction of his authority, and received in return, the whole honor of the invention.

Cæsar's Commentaries are too well known to admit of much animadversion upon them. They are evidently

formed on the model of Xenophon's *Anabasis*. Their language is pure, and flows with that ease and perspicuity, which has induced readers unanimously to compare it to a gentle and beautiful river, whose surface is smooth, and waters pellucid. They who lament the want of political observations in them, and of masterly strokes of animated eloquence, should remember, that Cæsar professed only to write commentaries, and not a just and legitimate* history.

There is not much remaining of this great man's composition;† but there is enough to induce us to lament that he did not use the pen more than the sword. Poggius maintains, with great force of argument, that in military merit, his first object, he was greatly inferior to Scipio.

Pliny the elder seems to think vigor of mind the distinguishing character of Cæsar. He means not firmness and resolution only; but a peculiar celerity and irresistable force, which can be compared to nothing more aptly than to fire. He could, at the same time, read and write, and listen with attention. He has been known to dictate to his amanuenses six or seven letters at once. Who but must lament that ambition stole him from the Muses? He might have spent all his fire, and acquired immortal fame, in composing an epic poem, or the history of his country, without shedding a drop of blood, or breaking one widow's or orphan's heart; and with the praise and delight of all posterity.

* *Justam legitimam* historiam: a classical mode of expression; but naturalized by Middleton and Bishop Hurd.

† Besides those mentioned, Cæsar wrote the following works, which are lost...Epistles, at least sixteen; *Libri Auspicionum*, *Augurale*... that he translated Aratus's Phænomena. Other things are attributed to him, but, it is supposed, erroneously.

EVENING II.

ON THE ÆSOPIAN FABLES AS A SCHOOL BOOK FOR VERY YOUNG CHILDREN.

I THINK it may be a matter of doubt, whether the presenting of the Æsopian fables, which are called the Æsopian, to infant minds, is the most eligible mode of com-

municating those first ideas, which are said to be of the greatest consequence, and of the longest duration.

I object not to the moral, which is excellent, if the child could find it out: but the child thinks of nothing but the narrative, and perhaps, in the childish age, ought to think of nothing else. What has the infant of six or seven years to do with the cunning maxims of the world? The great business is, at that time, to open the mind in the pleasantest manner, by representing agreeable images, and by exciting and gratifying curiosity.

The images of animals, dogs, horses, bulls, peacocks, are very agreeable to children; and as fables exhibit such images, they are so far proper for their elementary instruction. But the objection is to that shocking violation of truth and nature, which represents the irrational and mute creation reasoning and conversing by articulate language*.

Children naturally love truth, and when they read a story, their first question is, whether it is true? If they find it true, they are pleased with it; if not, they value it but little, and it soon becomes insipid. But they either immediately know that a story, in which a dog or a horse is represented speaking, is false; or if they believe it true, it contradicts their experience, and confounds all their ideas, so that they hardly know how to trust the evidence of their senses.

The reasoning and conversation of irrational animals raise them to a level with the human species; and if children are to respect reason and speech as most excellent gifts, they will, in their imaginations, honor the cock, the wolf, and the fox, as much as man, or else degrade man to the rank of the cock, the wolf, and the fox.

Is zoology a valuable part of knowledge, and confessedly useful and pleasing to children? Then why mislead them in their first ideas of animals around them, by attributing to animals not only speech and reason, but a thousand actions, instincts, and contrivances, totally different from those which are natural?

While I am writing, I open Croxall, and I see a print of a cat hanging by the hinder legs, on a peg, and pretending to be dead, in order to entice the mice to come down.

* Quodcunque ostendis mihi sicincredulus odi. Hor.

A child of strong sense will say, How could a cat tie her hinder legs together in such a manner as to hang herself up as represented? and have cats such refined subtility? I mention this instance out of a hundred others, merely because I accidently open the book at that fable. As the cat is an animal with which children are in general well acquainted, any unnatural representation of it, will immediately be detected and despised.

The style and language of all the Æsopian fables now in use, is generally above the comprehension of those by whom alone they are read. Croxall's is at the same time a very mean style. Dodsley's indeed, is a far better; but, in search of fine language, he has deviated greatly from simplicity, and rendered his fables unintelligible to those for whom they are chiefly designed.

L'Estrange's vulgarity, indelicacy, and foolish politics, deservedly condemn his book to oblivion. His book is nauseously vulgar, and fit only for the jakes. I cannot admire either his or Croxall's applications. They are, indeed, seldom read by children, and serve only to swell the volumes. They are too long, and too badly written, to serve for the instruction of young scholars. Two or three lines of application, in the manner of Phædrus, would have answered the purpose much better.

As to the propriety of Croxall's language, that I may not be thought to chuse the worst specimens, I will quote three or four lines of his first fable, and leave it to the reader to judge how well it is adapted to children.

"A brisk young cock," says he, "in company with two or three pullets, *his mistresses*, raking upon a dunghill for something to entertain them with, happened to scratch up a jewel. *He knew what it was well enough*," &c. I say nothing of the absurdity of giving children an idea that a cock "knows what a jewel is well enough." I only animadvert on the ordinary mode of expression. It aims at humor without reaching it; and is totally destitute of that elegant simplicity, in which a narrative of this kind should be presented to children. It were easy to fill a volume with the vulgarisms and absurdities of Croxall's Æsopian fables.

But yet, for want of a better, this book, with the help of the wooden cuts, has served to entertain children. All *I contend* for is, that it is not adapted to the use of chil-

dren by the author, neither is it, in itself fit for them. It is at once too high and too low for their purpose.

Are Gay's fit for children? Not for very young ones. They are far above their comprehension. They are not entirely intelligible to children under twelve or fourteen, unless in rare cases of premature improvement and segacity. But some book is wanted that shall be in general calculated for all children at that period, when the mind, like the rosebud, is half closed and half expanded.

Fables are proper; but what fables? Only those among the Æsopian, in which the animals do not speak, and do not act inconsistently with their nature.

But by *fables*, I mean, what the word *properly* means, *stories in general*, and not those of Æsop only. Those of Æsop, after all that has been said on the propriety of children's reading them, are fitter for men than children, and were originally addressed to men on momentous occasions. They are seldom read by children, so as to afford the very sage and important instruction which their inventors intended to convey in this artful and insinuating mode.

I recommend *fables* of another kind, for the purpose of initiation; that is, *tales*, which paint pictures in the imagination, affect the heart, excite laughter, or powerfully interest and indulge curiosity.

If it should be asked, Where such are to be found; I cannot immediately answer: but I can say without hesitation, who could compose them with judgment and genius. The reader will conjecture that I mean that lady who published some admirable Lessons and Hymns for Children. Almost every word in those books is judiciously selected, and they are so entertaining, that children read without considering them as a task, just as they should do; the delight beguiling the labor.

Studio sallante laborem. *Hor.*

A volume of fables by that lady, consisting of the best and most rational of the Æsopian, and of other entertaining narratives, whether with a moral *expressed* or not, would be a most valuable present to the rising generation. One would almost wish for infancy again, for the pleasure of reading it, and escaping dull lessons in spelling books, dull fables in Croxall, and a hundred other dismal and

dreary moralities, which have little other tendency than to make the young mind loath the sight of a book, and hate those things which, properly managed, afford an exquisite delight, by painting to the imagination and gratifying curiosity.

EVENING LII.

ON THE LITERARY CHARACTER OF OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

Ingenii largitor venter.

THE old saying *veratio dat intellectum*,* I am sorry to observe, seems to have received some confirmation from the instances of many ingenious men,† worthy of a better fate. To the distresses which poets have felt, are often attributed the finest of their poems; but, perhaps, it may be justly urged, that their industry and not their abilities, was increased or excited by distress. This indeed is partly true, but not entirely. They must have had abilities inherent in them, or they could not have been excited; according to that vulgar observation, that it is impossible to get blood out of a stone: but at the same time, there is every reason to believe that their abilities were actually improved by that thoughtfulness and attention which distress has a tendency to produce.

And yet, with respect to poetry, a diversity of opinions prevail on the effects of distress: for while the author in my motto says, that hunger gives ingenuity, another informs us, that the mind must be free from anxiety in order to make good verses, nor be troubled with the care of procuring a blanket. Horace has his belly-full of wine and dainties when he calls on the name of Bacchus with all the frantic enthusiasm of poetry.‡

I am afraid Juvenal, who is rather given to declamation, asserted this doctrine without a due attention to actual experience: for in his time, as well as ours, poverty seems to have had a favorable influence on poetry. Many instances may be produced of this truth in the annals of

* Vexation improves the understanding.

† Dignı meliore fato.

‡ Anxietate carens animus versus facit, omnis acerbi
Impatiens, nec de lodoice paranda
Sollicitus, satur est cum dicit Horatius, Euce. Juv.

modern literati; and I believe we may add to the number the name of Oliver Goldsmith.

From his want of attention to that œconomy which dunces often pay, and are very happy in consequence of it, he spent his life in penury. But his mind was rich, and dispensed a portion of its opulence to provide sustenance for its partner. To his distresses the literary world is indebted for a few very fine compositions. In the school of affliction he learned to feel, or at least to exercise those feelings which his writings express with so much sensibility. His genius was called forth by want; and when once he began to feel his strength, he relied on it for support. He who writes for support, will often write when necessity urges, rather than when genius impels, and the consequence will be a great inequality.

Goldsmith, though a good writer in prose, appears to me to owe his most solid reputation to poetry.

Edwin and Angelina is one of the most popular pieces in the language; perhaps it stands next in the favor of the people to Gray's delightful Elegy. Its general reception proves that its beauties are generally felt, and need not be pointed out by the subtle remarks of critical refinement. The language and sentiments are delicate. The sentiments came from a tender heart, and the language was dictated by a most elegant taste. Who but must lament that he who felt so tenderly, and wrote so sweetly, often wanted a shilling to provide him with his daily bread. But he was compassionate to every child of misfortune, and generous beyond the rules of prudence.

> For to the houseless child of want
> His door was open still,
> And, though his portion was but scant,
> He gave it with good will.

In the traveller he adopts a different style of poetry; but in the strong and nervous language of a Dryden, a Tickel, or of an Addison (in his letter to Lord Hallifax,) he exhibits the same fine vein of exquisite sensibility.

The first ten lines constitute a poetical paragraph not often exceeded in magnificence of style and tenderness of affection, by any verses in the English language; and the subsequent passages are seldom inferior in strength, and often exceed it in imagery. The whole breathes a manly spirit, and a love of human nature, of liberty, and of his

country. It is one of those poems which, among th numbers which daily sink in the gulph of oblivion, w glide along the stream of time to late posterity. It formed to be placed in the rank of classics, because it a dresses at once the bosom and the fancy. Such feelin are raised by it, as must please always and universall and this is indeed the effect of all the works which li and flourish in ages distant from their production, wh the arts of conciliating favor and exciting attention, a when partiality and personal interest operate no mor

Next in reputation to the Traveller, stands his Dese ed Village. The subject did not require so nervous style as the Traveller; but it required sweetness, tende ness, simplicity; and in these most delightful graces richly abounds. The poet every where displays in it zeal for the happiness of mankind in the lower ranks society, and a detestation of that pride, vice, and luxur and of those deviations from nature and primitive sii plicity, which enormous opulence contributes to introduc

The versification has in it something original. It is e cellently adaped to the subject, though it is unlike th of Pope, Dryden, or any predecessor. There is som thing in its flow remarkably pathetic. It came from th heart; and the imagination only added the beautif tinges of poetical coloring.

The public who, in a length of time, are always foun to decide with solidity of judgment, though often t hasty in their first applause, have selected all the mo striking passages of the poem, and almost committe them to memory. The village preacher, the villag schoolmaster, and the village alehouse, are drawn wi affection, and have recommended themselves to the a tention of every sympathizing reader.

I have known fastidious critics of reputed learnin who pretended that they could see no superior excellen in these poems, and suggested that the popularity of poem was in their minds a suspicious circumstance, ar led them to conclude, *prima facie*, that it was of litt intrinsic value. But it may be fairly concluded that suc persons, actuated by envy, undervalue what they ha been unable to obtain; and, like the fox in the fable, sti matize, as unworthy their endeavors, the grapes whic they cannot reach.

Men of logical and mathematical heads are apt to view a poem principally with an eye to its plan, to the mechanical circumstances of method, and the regular disposition of the component parts; but such persons have indeed no juster idea of real beauty in a poem, than a common stonemason or bricklayer, who works by rule and line, of magnificence and grace in a fine piece of architecture.

A poem is indeed the more perfect, the more regular its plan; but there are graces beyond the reach of art, and these will fully compensate, when they abound, for the want of mechanical regularity. Horace says, in the style of critical legislation,

Dulcia sunto.

Let poems give pleasure and they will be read, while critics rail unheard or unregarded.

Goldsmith was buried in Poet's Corner, and he is chiefly to be considered as a poet; for though his prose is animated, and contains many fine images expressed in vivid language, yet it is incorrect and unequal, the hasty production of necessity working against inclination.

His Citizen of the World has, with many good papers, many absurd ones, and many written in a careless manner. It will never hold a distinguished place in a select library.

Some of his Essays are beautiful. There is a delicacy of phrase, and a tenderness of affection in many of them, and the author has attempted humor on several subjects with success; but here also is something of inequality, incorrectness, and absurdity.

As a dramatist, his genius verged to the farsical. His Vicar of Wakefield I think the best of his prosaic writings. It speaks to the heart, and causes such an interest, as leads the understanding to connive at a very great degree of improbability.

The Histories of Greece, Rome and England, are merely compilations, hastily finished for the temporary supply of money; and though they are not without animated passages, cannot be raised higher in the scale of literature than the rank of school books.

Goldsmith had a great taste for natural history, and wished, as I heard him say, to write something in the

manner of the elder Pliny. But he had not a sufficient share of science to qualify him for the performance. In his *Animated Nature*, he therefore had recourse to compiling, and, I believe, descended to mere translation. What he wrote himself displays his genius to advantage, but not his accuracy; and, upon the whole, he appears to have been more solicitous to write an entertaining than a solid book. It may please and improve schoolboys and superficial readers; but scholars and philosophers will rather chuse to draw from the fountains which supplied his stream; a stream which, it must be confessed, in the present case, often runs like a shallow rivulet.

Want made him write much, and rather on subjects suggested by his paymasters than by the unbiassed feelings of his own genius. The lumber of the compilations will sink in the gulph of oblivion; but the poems will glide on to posterity. Their style and pathos have been well imitated by Mr. Crabbe in his Village; nor is the loss of a Goldsmith's descriptive and sentimental strain unsupplied by a Cowper.

EVENING LIII.

ON SOME REMARKABLE LATIN EPIGRAMS.

I WAS lately reading an impassioned copy of verses in an epigrammatist, celebrated in his time, one Bernardus Bauhusius, and could not help being struck with the impropriety of its conclusion. After the tenderest exclamation it ends in a pun. The subject is *Ecce homo*, too serious an one to admit of witticism; and I believe the writer, in attempting wit upon it, complied with the taste of the times without the least intention to be unbecomingly jocular.

Ecce meus Je-us pro me, livorque, cruorque,
Et tabum, et fanies! Ecce homo, nullus homo!
Ecce homo, qui pro me!.....sed flendum est.....currite ocelli,
In duo flumina, mi lumina, liquimini.
Ite, piæ guttæ, pallantes currite rivis,
Grandibus, indomitis tabificis lachrymis.
Quid? nondum ulla venit? cessatis, lumina? saltem
Unica.....saltem una, O guttula parva, veni.
Me miserum! non ulla venit, non prosilit ulla!
O pie Christe, quis est, quem tu *adamas*? adamas.

I add a few epigrams, from the same author, who is now little known for the entertainment of the classical reader. The following is on the three grand enemies of man, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, imitated, I think, by Parnell:

TRES HOMINIS HOSTES.

Unum grammaticum, logicumque et rhètora vita:
Hos modo vitaris, cætera tuta tibi.
Quis rhetor?...*Mundus*;...fallax logicus?...*Cacodæmon*;
Semper declinans, est *Caro*, grammaticus.

The following is a part of an epigram on the bed of the new-born infant Jesus, and a curious specimen of the taste of the times. The poet laments the coldness of the bed.

IN LECTULUM DULCISSIMI INFANTIS JESU RECENS NATI.

Conde sinistellam, dextellam, *Jesule*, conde.
Conde, puelle, aures, conde, puelle, caput.
Oscula, parvule, conde, labella, tenerrima conde,
Hoc tege lumen et hoc, hoc tege tempus et hoc....
O ego, mi Jesu, tuus O! si lectulus essem,
Te, te ego vel fuso sanguine, calfacerem.
Sic ego; sed contra mater: 'non *sanguine* gaudet
'Ille meus dulcis, mellius ille meus;
'Poscit *aquam*'...jam nunc dabimus, dulcissime virgo,
An multam? 'multam'....num gelidam?....calidum:'
Num dulcem?....'salsam:'....de flumine?....'lumine'....fonte?
'Fronte'....Obe satis est, jam dabo, virgo, dabo.'

Who is not ready to say with the poet, *Ohe satis est?*

He thus concludes an epitaph on Arias Montanus, the celebrated linguist. After enumerating almost all the known languages, in which he says Montanus was completely skilled, he adds well enough,

Angelicam optavit linguam quoque discere; Christus
Audiit, angelicum sustulit inque chorum.

But the grand efforts of genius, on which the poet values himself not a little, is the following. It has been noticed in the Spectator. He calls it a verse making one book, and a book consisting of one verse. But I will give it and its title in the poet's own words:

"Divæ optimæ, maximæque matri virgini Mariæ admirabilem hunc *Unius libri versum, unius versum librum*, Christianum Proteum, tot ora scilicit quot cœlum sydera gerentem (*verti enim* potest millies, bis et vicies, sensu

salvo et heroici carminis lege) nostri in cœli reginam affectus monumentum hoc ponimus sempiternum:

Tot tibi sunt dites virgo, quot sidera cœla.

"In eodum hoc Proteo retrogrados versus pœne centum est invenire."

Another, which he thinks a superior effort, follows:

"Deo optimo maximo, æterno Dei filio Christo Jesu mundi servatori *Proteus* e variis sacrarum literarum locis depromptus, priori longe admirabilior, nam sensu salvo et heroici carminis lege, verti potest 3,628,800, scilicet tricies, sexies, centies, millies vicies octies millies et octingenties."

Rex, dux, sol, lex, lux, fons, spes, pax, mons, petra, Christus.

What a laborious calculation for a poet!

In a florid epigram, of some length, he gives his *heart* to Christ, and exhorts the sons of men to do likewise, concluding thus:

Corda date....O qui dat, quam sine corde sapit!

Of St. Stephen, who rejoiced while he was stoned, he says,

Siccine amat lapides?....sic certe...nonne *Corona*
Ornari multo pulchra velit lapide.

His epigrammic remark on the physician, is not in a bad taste:

Res misera medicus est, cui nunquam bene est
Nisi male sit quam plurimis.

In his aspirations after the heavenly flame, he exclaims,

O amor! O desiderium! mea fax, meus ignis
Cur me sic uris? cur?.....quia tam *procul es.*

The beggar's speech is striking:

De Deo loquor libenter, non libenter audio.

His hint to a sturdy beggar deserves attention, from the mendicant order;

Mosce, quid æra petis? vili quid de stipe vivis?
Alcidæ nervos ossa Milonis habes.
Vah pudeat!....sum pauper, ais; mentire; supersunt
En bini census, dextra, sinistra, tibi.

The following written, under a *half*-length figure contains a fine compliment:

Dimidium pinxit quæ dextera *Borromæum*,
Norat quod totum pingere nemo potest.

Another good epitaph on Arias Montanus:

Hoc *Syrus* in tumulo est, *Hebræus*, *Graius*, et *Auson*
Verus item, non teter et ustus, *Arabs*.
' Quinque homines,' inquis '.... ne, lector, fallere; namque
Graius, is et Latius, qui Syrus ille et Arabs,
Hebræusque, *idem* est: nempe hic est magnus *Arias*,
Qui, *patria*, *unus* homo; *quinque* sed, *ore*, fuit.

The use of religious love and fear:

Ut fugiam scelus omne, amem super omnia numen,
Da mihi sæna, timor, da mihi calcar, amor.

But I will add no more, least I weary the reader, whom I wish, for a moment, to amuse.

Bernardus Bauhusius, like most of the sons of Loyola, possessed learning and ingenuity, and the absurdities of his manner are to be attributed to the erroneous taste of his age. There are some kinds of false wit as entertaining from their absurdity as the true. It is the *mediocris poeta*, the middling poet, the insipid race who want sense to be right, and spirit to be wrong, whom Horace means when he says, neither gods nor men, nor the booksellers shops can tolerate them. It would be injustice to Bauhusius not to allow that he has many elegant lines and phrases, and some epigrams in the truly classical taste, with sense and beauty in the beginning and middle, and with point at the end.

I will dismiss this subject with the poet's own apology.

POETA AD MUSAM SUAM.

Serpere te momi dicunt, nimiumque jacere,
Increpat et soccos ille vel ille tuos.
Ne tamen hoc teneras urat tibi, ...Musa, medullas,
Serpunt et violæ et dulcia fragra *jacent*.

The modern Latin poets, though at present neglected, were much read, and often imitated by Pope, Addison, Parnell, and most of the wits of their age.

EVENING LIV.

ON THE MOST EFFECTUAL MEANS OF PROMOTING SELF-COMPLACENCY.

THERE is a kind of self-complacency which arises solely from excessive self-conceit. A person under the influence of this foible imagines every thing which he says or does excellent, and every thing that belongs to him superior to the very same thing in the possession of his neighbor. According to the common adage, his geese are all swans. This quality renders a man completely ridiculous, and is indeed utterly inconsistent with good sense and the obvious suggestions of common experience.

But there is also another kind of self-complacency, which is founded on solid and virtuous principles, and is the cause of one of the most substantial satisfactions which human nature can enjoy. I mean to enumerate a few of the means which have a natural tendency to produce it.

The offices of Christian piety are attended with pleasures of a species no less durable than exalted. It was this which induced Erasmus to declare in a serious sense, that there are no greater *Epicures* than *pious Christians*. What can contribute more to pleasure than the consequence of piety, the calm serenity of reliance and resignation?

To please one's-self, such is the happy constitution of things, nothing contributes more effectually than the *communication of innocent pleasure to others*. I say innocent pleasure; for it is the nature of guilt to add a bitter infusion to the sweetest cup of human delight.

Acts of pure christian charity, unmixed with ostentation, leave a relish behind them which few gratifications equal or resemble. I have no doubt but that the internal sensations of a truly charitable man, after having unostentatiously relieved a person in great and urgent distress, are more pleasurable than those of the most celebrated conqueror: and I imagine the good Samaritan and Mr. Hanway enjoyed greater delight than was usually experienced by Alexander the Great, Cæsar, Charles the Twelfth, Frederick King of Prussia, or Lord Clive. The *blood* seems to run more smoothly in its channels after a

rolent action; so that the delight of it, while per-
' pure, may at the same time be denominated a sen-
ɔleasure. It is a delight also which may be recalled
ll, and it affords peculiar solace under sickness and
ion.

the state of man is progressive, Providence has been
ed to ordain that the steps of his *improvement* should
tended with complacency. Whether the improve-
is moral or mental, the pleasure is great which ac-
ıanies it. A man feels himself rising in value by eve-
:w acquisition of good qualities. To be advancing
and more, by daily approaches, to attainable perfec-
is a state so pleasant, that it may be said to resemble
scent up a beautiful hill, where the prospect over va-
ted meadows, meandering streams, forests, distant
and spires, becomes at every step more delightful.
dustry in laudible pursuits is a never-failing source of
ıal satisfaction. It causes a pleasing succession of
, by bringing new objects, or a change of circumstan-
ɔntinually in view. And if it is conversant with mat-
ɪf importance, and attended with success, there is no
so happy as that of an industrious man in the exer-
ɪf his skill and abilities.

have subdued an irregular or excessive passion, and
ve resisted a mean, a vicious, a degrading inclina-
affords a pleasing consciousness of virtuous resolu-
; a sensation so agreeable and flattering, as could not
been equalled by indulgence or compliance with it;
has this additional advantage, that it is not followed
ain, remorse, or any consequences which can occa-
shame or sorrow. On the contrary, after the gratifi-
n of vice or irregularity, a man feels himself little and
he despises himself, and recovers not his happiness
y contrition or amendment, he regains a due degree
f esteem.

o bad man, says the heathen poet, *is a happy man.*
*o malus Felix.** He is perhaps for ever in pursuit
ıjoyment; but he feels agitations and anxieties that
ıct much from his pleasures; and his reflections upon
ı, and their consequences to himself, his family, and
y others, become, at least in the solitary hours of de-
ɔn, ill-*health*, or of night alone, extremely uneasy.

* Juvenal.

So that it is not merely the declamation of a preacher, but the decision of experience arising from actual fact, which pronounces that a good conscience is necessary to the true enjoyment of life.

No man can have a conscience perfectly void of offence; but whoever has violated it reluctantly, and repented as often as he has transgressed, may be said to have a good conscience; and a treasure it is more to be desired than the golden stores continually brought from the East, by men, whom Providence suffers to become enormously rich, to shew that enormous riches are no decisive marks of its peculiar favor.

How sweet the slumbers of him who can lie down on his pillow and review the transactions of every day without condemning himself! A *good conscience* is the finest opiate. The *materia medica* cannot supply one half so efficacious and pleasant; and all the nabobs together, if they were to unite their fortunes in contribution, could not purchase a similar one.

Good health, preserved by temperance and regularity, gives a sweetness to life, a pleasantness of feeling which no civil honors or secular prosperity can bestow.

Prudential œconomy in the management of expences, and the confining of them to the certain income, so as not to be incumbered with debt, or distressed by the invention of ways and means to raise supplies for the current year, exempt from ten thousand painful solicitudes, and give an ease and calmness of spirits unknown to the most opulent who possess not this caution; a caution equally required by prudence and common honesty. To see, in consequence of it, a family rising to independence, not likely to be exposed to the scorn and ill usage of the world, affords a comfort more satisfactory than the fugacious pleasures of ostentatious extravagance.

Self-esteem, founded on rational principles, is one of the first requisites to a happy life; and to the honor of virtue and religion, let it be remarked, that it is attainable only by a benevolent, a wise, a prudent conduct. Men who, by early education, by happily falling among good examples, by reading good books, and by forming good habits in consequence of all these advantages, conduct *themselves* in all things with reason, with moderation, and with kindness;—these are they, who, after all the preten-

sions of voluptuousness, enjoy the most of this world; for their happiness flows like a gentle stream uninterrupted in its course, uniform and constant, while that of others is like a torrent, which dashes from rock to rock, all foam, all noise for a little while, till it is lost in the ocean, or wasted away by its own violence. It is destructive of others, destructive of itself, and too turbulent to admit of pure tranquillity.

Let those who have wandered in pursuits which themselves are ready to acknowledge delusive and unsatisfactory, resolve, by way of experiment, to try whether the pleasure of that self-esteem which arises from rectitude of conduct, is not the most pleasing possession which the world affords; whether it does not promote a constant cheerfulness and gaiety of heart, which renders life a continual feast. The path of duty, comparatively speaking, is strewed with flowers and sweetened with fragrance. To the timid, the slothful, and ill-disposed, the first entrance may appear to be closed with briars; but he who has courage to break through the difficulties raised by his own imagination, will find himself in as pleasant a walk as is to be found beneath the moon. But I will not draw a deceitful picture with the colors of rhetoric. Much uneasiness and some sorrow must be the lot of every man in his present state; I only contend that the pleasantness of wisdom and virtue is not fictitious, and that he who faithfully adheres to them will, upon the whole, enjoy all the delight of which his nature and his situation render him capable.

Many philosophers maintain that selfishness is the spring of all our activity. Whether their system is well founded or not, it is certain that in pursuit of the pleasure of rational self-esteem, we may be as selfish as we please without incurring the disgrace of meanness; for to the indulgence of this kind of selfishness it is necessary to cultivate every thing liberal, generous, useful, amiable. The pleasure arising from it is not unsocial, though it centres in self; for it is not to be enjoyed but by promoting the good of society. The pleasure is the first reward which Providence has vouchsafed to assign to the honest efforts of humble virtue, a reward infinitely disproportionate to that reserved for it in a better state, but still of a pure, of

a celestial nature, and great enough to excite the most ardent efforts in its acquisition.

What happiness can subsist without this essential ingredient, self-complacency? External circumstances are of no value without it. The gold loses its lustre, and the purple its glossy dye, without it. Titles, rank, power, property, the grand idols of a prostrate world, are deceitful and empty whenever the delicious tranquillity of a mind soothed to rational complacency is a stranger to the bosom.

There is this additional advantage in being pleased with one's self, on solid reasons, that it puts one in good humor with the world. All nature seems to smile with us; and our hearts, dilating with conscious virtue and benevolence, feel a new delight in the communication of happiness.

EVENING LV.

ON THE AFFECTATION OF EXCESSIVE SENSIBILITY.

BELINDA was always remarkably fond of pathetic novels, tragedies, and elegies. Sterne's sentimental beauties were her peculiar favorites. She had indeed contracted so great a tenderness of sensibility from such reading, that she often carried the amiable weakness into common life, and would weep and sigh as if her heart were breaking at occurrences which others, by no means deficient in humanity, viewed with indifference. She could not bear the idea of killing animals for food. She detested the sports of fishing and hunting, because of their ineffable cruelty. She was ready to faint if her coachman whipt his horses when they would not draw up hill; and she actually fell down in a fit on a gentleman's treading on her favorite cat's tail as he eagerly stooped to save her child from falling into the fire.

Being rather of a romantic turn, she would frequently utter sentimental soliloquies on benevolence and humanity; and when any catastrophe of a pathetic nature occurred, she generally gave vent to her feelings by writing a lamentation. I procured from one of her friends the fol-

lowing piece, with liberty to present it to the public eye. —Belinda, it seems, was at her toilette, adorning her tresses, when an animalcule of no great repute in the world, and who often obtrudes where he is not welcome, fell from her beautiful tresses on her neck. In the first emotions of her surprise and anger she seized the little wretch, and crushed it between her nails, till it expired with a sound

Δουπησεν δε πεσων,

as Homer expresses the exit of his heroes.

—The noise and the sight of the viscera soon recalled her sensibility, and she thus expressed it ·

"Thou poor partaker of vitality, farewell. Life undoubtedly was sweet to thee, and I have hastily deprived thee of it. But surely the world was wide enough for thee and me. And it was ungenerous to murder one who sought an asylum under my fostering protection.

"Because thou art minute we are inclined to suppose thee insensible. But doubtless thou hadst nerves and delicate sensations proportioned to the fineness of thy organs. Perhaps thou hadst a partner of thine affections and a numerous progeny, whom thou sawest rising to maturity with parental delight, and who are now left destitute of a protector in their helpless infancy.

"Thy pain is indeed at an end; but I cannot help deploring the unfeeling cruelty of those who deprive the smallest reptile, to whom nature has given breath, of that life which, though it appears contemptible in the eyes of the thoughtless, yet is sweet to the meanest animal—*was* sweet to thee, thou poor departed animalcule! Alas, that I must now say *was sweet* to thee! Did I possess the power of resuscitation I would reanimate thy lifeless corpse, and cherish thee in the warmest corner of thy favorite dwelling-place.—But adieu for ever; for my wish is in vain. Yet if thy shade is still conscious, and hovers over the head it once inhabited, pardon a hasty act of violence, which I endeavor to expiate with the tear of sympathy and the sigh of sensibility."

Flendo turgiduli rubent ocelli.

I am informed that the drawer of her writing-table is

full of elegies and elegiac sonnets on rats and mice caught in traps, and of tom-tits and robin-redbreasts killed by shool-boys. I remember to have heard a most pathetic elegy recited on the death of a redbreast, much in Belinda's style, but I can only recollect one pathetic *Erotesis*, "Who killed Cock Robin?"

There is also a sublime deification of an earth-grub which she once accidently trod upon as she was endeavoring to rescue a fly from a spider in the garden. It concludes thus:

> But cease to weep—no more to crawl
> In the dank earth beneath you wall,
> On snow white pinions thou shalt rise,
> And claim thy place in yonder skies:
>
> BELINDA'S *Effusions of Sentiment.*

Efts, toads, bats, every thing that hath life, has a claim to her tenderest compassion. And certainly her tenderness to them does her honor; but the excessive sensibility which their slightest sufferings seem to occasion, gives room to suspect that she is not without affectation. What is so singular and excessive can scarcely be natural.

Having heard and observed so much of her delicate feelings for the irrational creation, I was naturally led to make inquiries concerning her behavior in the more interesting attachments of social life. I expected to find that—she, of course,

> Like the needle true,
> Turn'd at the touch of joy or woe,
> And turning trembled too.

The following is the result of my investigation. Her temper was so various and violent that her husband was often obliged to leave his home in search of peace. I heard he had just recovered from a fit of illness, during the whole of which she had seldom visited him, and shewn no solicitude. She had sat weeping over a novel on the very day on which his fever came to a crisis, and the physicians had declared his recovery dubious. On his recovery, he had gone a voyage to the East Indies, by her advice for the improvement of his fortune. He took leave of her very affectionately; but she was dressing to go and see Mrs. Siddons in Calista, and could not possibly spend much time in a formal parting, which was a thing she *bove all things* detested. But, let it be remembered, she

duly fainted away in the boxes, on Mrs. Siddon's first entrance, before the actress had uttered a single syllable.

Two fine little boys were left under her care without control, during their father's absence. The little rogues had fine health and spirits, and would make a noise, which she could not bear, as she was busy in preparing to act a capital part in the Orphan, at a private theatre built by a man of fortune and fashion for his own amusement. She determined therefore to send the brats to school. Indeed she declared in all companies she thought it the first of a mother's duties to take care that her children were well educated. She therefore sent them outside passengers by the stage coach, to an Academy in Yorkshire, where she had stipulated that they should not come home in the holidays, and indeed not till their father arrived; for she was meditating a new tragedy, under the title of the Distressed Mother or the Widowed Wife.

Though she did not appear to me very fond of her husband, who was a plain good man, without any *fine feelings*, and was displeased with her children, whose noise interrupted her studies, yet, I took it for granted, that she who spoke so feelingly of distress, of benevolence, of humanity, of charity, and who sympathized with the poor beetle that we tread upon, could not but be profusely beneficent to all her fellow-creatures in affliction who solicited her assistance; but I was here also greatly mistaken. A workman in stopping up her windows in consequence of the commutation tax, fell from a scaffold three stories high, and broke his leg. The passengers took him up, knocked at the door, and desired he might be admitted, till a surgeon could be sent for, but I heard her as I passed by declaring, in a voice that might be heard from the stair-case on which she stood, quite to the end of the street—"He shall not be brought here. We shall have a great deal of trouble with him. Take him to the hospital immediately; and shut the door, d'ye hear John." The passengers, lest time should be lost, hurried the poor man to a neighboring public house, where the honest landlord, with a pot of porter in his hand, and an unmeaning oath in his mouth, exclaimed, "Let him in?—aye, and welcome.—Here, Tom, see him laid on my own bed, and let him have every thing necessary; and if he never pays me it's no great matter. Come, here's to his

getting well soon—Poor man!—I warrant now he has a wife and family that must starve till he gets about again—but they shan't neither—I'll mention it to our club—They are all hearty ones, I know, and will subscribe handsomely."

The truth was, that the man had a wife and family, as my landlord conjectured, and is commonly the case. I heard that he was soon afterwards carried to Belinda with a petition, drawn up very pathetically, by a person who never gave any thing himself, but the moving expressions. Belinda had given orders to the servants to say she was not at home if any body should call that week. For, indeed, she was exceedingly engaged in penning an elegy on the lap-dog who had died of a looseness; and had intended to finish her address to the Duchess on the hardships of the laboring poor.

I was satisfied with these inquiries, and began to lose my veneration for ladies and gentlemen of exquisite sensibility, of delicate feeling, and the most refined sentiment; believing firmly, that there is more good sense and true kindness in the plain motherly house-wife, who is not above her domestic duties, and in the honest man of common sense, than in the generality of pretenders to more benevolent sensations or *finer feelings* than belong to other people of equal age, rank, opulence, and education.

EVENING LVI.

ON SOME EFFECTS OF A REGULAR UNIVERSITY EDUCATION.

SIR,

I WRITE to lay before you an evil which, I believe, hast not been publicly noticed, though I have every reason to think I am not singular in suffering it.

I am a man of patrimonial estate, and, living in the seat of my ancestors, have always supported a respectable rank in the neighboring country. Neither my fore-fathers nor myself ever aspired to the characters of fine gentleman, but we have been long esteemed as honest, English country-esquires, and company for the first families in the vicinity.

As I had an only son, I felt an ambition to improve the race by giving him a better education than ever fell to the lot of any of the family. I therefore resolved, after he had passed through the grammar school in the next town, to send him to Oxford. I knew nothing of the university; but by all accounts, I concluded it was a wonderful place for improving young men in learning, and all gentleman-like and scholar-like qualifications. I considered it as a market, where every thing that was good and right was to be purchased, if money was not wanting, and if pains were bestowed to bring it away. I had formed such notions of the place, that I almost conceived Greek, and Latin, and all sorts of sciences and accomplishments to be growing there as plentifully as wheat and turnips in some of my best enclosures.

Jack had been a rare boy at school, took his learning amazingly, and got the good word of his master, and every body who had any concern with him. He was modest, good natured, and dutiful. It did me good to see his honest ruddy countenance. He would blush, when the vicar examined him, like a young lady; though I found he always gave the right answers to the questions put to him by the learned doctor.

His Master assured me, that at the age of eighteen he was fit for the university; and therefore I removed him from a place where he was making daily improvement, and where his morals were in perfect safety, to settle him at the celebrated seat of the muses. I determined to convoy him myself to Oxford. In the post coach from London, we were accompanied by two smart young men, with high capes, nankin trowsers, and short sticks. They eyed me with contempt, and my boy with an appearance of affected pity. I said but little, and poor Jack, who had not been used to the company of such *knowing* young men, still less. Our fellow-travellers evidently did not like us at all; and therefore at Hounslow they mounted the coach-box and assumed the reins. We gave ourselves no concern, as they seemed to drive as well as if they had been always used to it; and we heard no more of them, till they met some of their acquaintance at Benson. After a mutual *tally-ho!* at meeting, one of the horsemen asked our academical drivers, why they did not get into the coach, as it was going to rain; to which a

voice from the box exclaimed with an oath—We had rather be wet to the skin than ride with two such d—d quizzical * rascals, an old curmudgeon, and a young cub going to be entered at College.

I smiled: but Jack looked grave, and did not seem to relish the contemptuous appellation. He looked at his clothes, stroked his long lank hair, viewed me from tip to toe, and sidled away from me, forming, if I read him right, resolutions not to be long subject to the sneers of two such fine spirited fellows. I told him, that if these were members of the university, which I doubted, they must be low, vulgar fellows, and not worthy our regard; but here he replied, I must be mistaken, as one of them had been accosted as he came along with the title of a Baronet, and the other of a Lord. I answered, that these were probably nick-names, which their vulgarities had acquired them; but I found, upon inquiry at the inn, that Jack's observation was not erroneous.

On our entrance into Oxford we were wonderfully struck with the sight of the handsome buildings, and the appearance of young men in square caps, with pig-tails, leather breeches, and shoe-strings, strutting about with gowns on their backs, like that of our good old vicar. Jack was awe-struck, and scarcely uttered a syllable except in admiration; but we were both smoked as quizzes as we passed the coffee-house in the High-street.

I entered him at a college recommended by the vicar; and after leaving a good deal of money, and a great deal more advice, returned, not without some anxiety, to the old quiet mansion at the Mote.

I had desired Jack to keep up a constant correspondence with me. His first letters were very respectful, very correct, and very sensible. I was delighted with them. The Vicar and I chuckled over them as we smoked our pipes, and drank success to the young Oxonian. But my joy was soon abated when, in a short time, instead of long, dutiful, and affectionate letters, I received about once a month, a scrawl scarcely legible, complaining that his allowance was insufficient to support the appearance of a gentleman, and insisting, in terms rather peremptory than suppliant, on an immediate augmentation. I complied with his request, for my affection for

* Vide Scoundrel's Dictionary.

him was great; but not without a gentle rebuke, which was suggested rather by prudence than resentment. My rebuke, however, gentle as it was, destroyed the effect of my compliance. A very saucy letter was the consequence, in which I was almost set at defiance.

I was grieved, and at first inclined to give vent to my uneasiness by an angry reprimand; but reflecting on the infirmities of youth, resolved hereafter to convince him of his error by argument, and to overcome him by kindness. I therefore gratified his wishes, dropt the subject of pecuniary supplies, and in my next letter expressed, what indeed I felt, an earnest desire to enjoy his company at the commencement of the long vacation.

He came, after spending a week by the way at the Hummums in Covent-Garden; and greatly was I surprised at his appearance. He was entirely changed in his external figure. He had lost the complexion of health; and his dress was in the style of a jockey, with a belt round his loins, and a leathern cap on his head. Unwilling to offend him, I kept my emotions of wonder to myself, and ran out to meet him, with as much glee as the father in the Gospel to embrace the prodigal son. His salutation was free and manly enough; but I expected something of his former tenderness. I thought, however, I might be wrong in wishing him to retain the behavior of a boy; and therefore took all in good part; but he had scarcely sat down in my parlor before he began to find fault with the cut and color of my coat, and to express his astonishment that I could wear such a *quizzical* peruke. I laughed; but he gave the subject a serious turn; and vowed that such queer ways as I had, disgraced the family, and made him ashamed of himself among his brother Oxonians.

It was now time to assume something of the authority of the father. I spoke in a tone of displeasure. My gentleman rose in haste, banged the door, took his horse, and went away, as I afterwards learned, to visit a fellow collegian who had invited him to spend the vacation at his father's near Newmarket. In a few days, being in want of money, he sent an awkward apology; and in the tenderness of parental indulgence, I once more freely gave and forgave.

He has now proceeded in a similar mode of behavior

during five or six years. My forbearance alone has prevented a final rupture. His provocations have been singularly great during the whole time; but in the last vacation, they exceeded all the preceding, in offensive expressions of disrepect and disobedience.

His contempt for me and his mother is at length open and undisguised. Nothing we say or do, is right; because it is not conformable to the principles and practices of his gay companions at college. My house, my furniture, my garden, my carriage, are all *antiquated*. It was but the other day, that he told me, he absolutely could not put up with me, if he did not make allowances for my not having had an university education. He corrects my speech, finds fault with the style and language of my letters, tells me I am unfit for the company of gentlemen, and that his mother is no better than a cook-maid in her Sunday clothes. He laments that, in consequence of our defects, he cannot see such company as he approves, at home.

Yet he frequently invites visitors from his college, to whom my stables and my cellars are open for use, without asking my permission, or even acquainting me with the liberties that are taken with them. Scenes of riot and excess pass under my roof, while I and my wife creep about as unnoticed and unrespected as the cat, or the old house-dog. I did indeed give him a hint, the other day, that my fortune was at my own disposal, and that aggravated and repeated provocations might tempt me to do what my disposition would shudder to think of. He whistled a tune by way of reply, and called for his boots and hunter.

He tells me, that he has just taken his degree with great credit, and that, whatever I may think, he is greatly esteemed in the university, as a devilish good sort of a fellow, a lad of spunk, a man of parts, and equally approved by the seniors and juniors.

Now, Sir, I am determined to bear his ill usage patiently, in the hope that as he grows older he will grow wiser; but I cannot help regretting that happy period when he was as amiable as he was innocent, and when he returned my affection with all the pious sensibility of unaffected gratitude.

I am to be consoled under the slights I suffer, my

neighbors tell me, with the idea that he is improved in a degree far beyond myself and any of the family, far beyond what my *confined notions* can conceive; that he is a gentleman, a man of fashion, and likely to adorn the fortune he is to inherit, by his spirit and liberality—in short, that he has had an *university education*, and sensibly availed himself of all its advantages.

My wife and I were sitting in our elbow-chairs last Sunday evening, and computing, according to our homely way of reckoning, the profits and loss of this said university education, which gives so much self-consequence.

I have paid two thousand pounds for five or six years of this university education, and I am confidently told, my son has incurred a debt of more than half that sum, with wine-merchants, horse-dealers, taylors, and the honorable fraternity of gamblers. He has lost his health, and the little school learning he took with him to college; and I have lost the comfort of a good son, and a quiet contented house.

Such is the loss; and what, on the other hand, is the gain? I have clearly gained nothing but a noisy, extravagant, insolent son, instead of an honest, modest, good-natured, and dutiful one. And what has my son gained? A freedom from what are called the prejudices of education; that is to say, great libertinism in principles and practice, and a certain *knowledge*, as it is called, which is totally unconnected with *science*, properly so termed, and consists of an acquaintance with the bad and destructive practices and manners of the very worst part of fashionable life. But what grieves me and his other most affectionate parent, is, that he has acquired A MOST SOVEREIGN CONTEMPT FOR HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, for those who loved him above all that this world contains, and who, in the hope of improving and adorning him, and adding to his and their own happiness, soared above their contented forefathers, and ambitiously resolved to give him a REGULAR and university education.

I am, Sir, your's &c.

FRANCIS HEARTY.'

P. S. I inclose the copies of two letters which came into my hands accidentally; the first is to his tutor; the second to one of his most familiar friends.

To the Reverend Jerome Hunter, D. D. Vice —— of —— College.

Dear Sir,

I AM sensible an apology is necessary for my great neglect in not duly attending as you desired me, and as I faithfully promised, last Saturday's fox hunt, at Shotover-hill. But your goodness will pardon my omission when I inform you of the cause. Poor Sukey, my best mare, was taken on Friday night with a most violent scouring. I nursed her myself, administered the medicines, and never quitted her a moment all night; having often been taught by you, how imprudent and dangerous it is to trust a favorite horse, during illness, to the management of a mercenary and ignorant groom. She is now better, and it is my stedfast resolution never more to be guilty of similar omission. I hope the rump and dozen which I fairly lost in the last bet I made with you in the Pig-market,* proved good. You have often told me they dress dinners admirably at Woodstock.

The old dog (be not alarmed, I do not mean the pointer, but my father) has got a church-yard cough. He is very savage, as usual; but when the rents come in at Michaelmas, I make no doubt of making him come down handsomely; after which I shall immediately go to Oxford, and keep the term, as I must do my exercises for my degree; and as the hunting season will be coming on apace. You promised me to get some strings of arguments to put into my cap. I believe you may get a capfull for a shilling, of Dick the bed-maker. The six *wall lectures* that you wrapt up your shoes in for your last journey, will be very convenient to me. I shall not want any declamations, as I have bought a couple of our college barber for sixpence.

Apropos —I have made great enquiry, as you instructed me, after the best saddler in London. I believe I have found one, who makes saddles on geometrical principles. He charges only one guinea over the common price [illegible] therefore I have bespoke three. The cheap stirru[illegible] you recommended so strongly when, a few yea[illegible] *you* examined me for my degree in the public [illegible] *he says*, are plated at Birmingham, and not so goo[illegible]

* A passage leading to the divinity school.

London make. The spurs are in the same predicament. So I ordered him to procure the best, and I sincerely hope what I have done will receive your approbation, for which I am, as I ought to be, very anxious. By the way, the saddler above mentioned is a devilish good *tick*.* He never said a syllable about the rhino. I shall take with me two or three *knowing* sticks.

The guns, the powder, and the patent shot, shall go down by the waggon; and if they should arrive before me, pray put the powder into my writing desk, and the guns and shot on any of the shelves in my study; but do not misplace the purging powders for the dogs.

The horse I bought of our Dean proved unsound; but I have had him made up, and when he is nicked and well peppered, I do not fear of making ten or twenty guineas clear profit upon him at Tattersal's. The instructions you gave me, for which I have incurred an eternal debt of gratitude, enable me often to deal in horse-flesh with considerable advantage.

Apropos again.—Will you part with your bitch terrier, which used to sit with you on the table at the coffee-house? I will give you five guineas for her. Or as cash runs rather short, I had rather you should take the Paris edition of Olivet's Cicero. You will find the first volume on the shelf, with some soap upon it, near the wash-hand bason, in my coal-hole; some of the others under three or four garden pots of geraniums and myrtles in the window; and the last in my dressing closet, under the powder-box, with my bands in it. The volumes are a little stained with port, but the backs are good. My father bought them for me at Prince's. I told him it was extravagance, and that I should have no occasion for them; but the old fool would have his way.

Pray order in against I come down, my usual stock of wine. You need not pay for it, as my landlord is a good tick.

I had almost forgot to mention, that I went, as you desired me, to see the sermons that are printed like written hand. I think they will answer your purpose, and at a venture, I intend to bring down three dozen, of which you will do me the favor to accept.

I am quite tired of the vacation. My father, poor man! *is such a boor,* and my mother, you know, is not fit for

* *Vide* the St. Giles' Vocabulary, or Oxford Interpreter.

genteel company. So you may imagine what a life I lead between them. But I seldom see either of them—I have separate apartments—separate cellar, stables, and dog-kennel. We shall have better times perhaps at Frankley-hall, before long, if this cough continues. Then I shall hope to see you here, to whom I owe so many obligations.

I am, dear Sir, your obliged pupil,
And humble servant, J. H.

P. S. How many more lessons shall you give Sancho, before you pronounce him completely broken in?

To Henry Spendall, Esq. Fellow of —— College.

Dear Harry,

I GIVE you joy, my boy. The incumbent that kept you so long out of the living your father bought for you, has tipt off, I hear. Now for the *japanning*; you must be *externally* as black as the devil while you are receiving your commission.

The living is in a fine sporting country, however. Two or three packs of fox-hounds in the neighborhood. I have a good mind to be a candidate for your curacy.

You intend, in due time, to take your doctor of divinity's degree, you tell me; because you have some interest in the borough and are promised the first prebendal stall, and are determined to support your rank with dignity. As I can answer for it you never wrote a syllable against church or state, and scarcely ever read any thing but the Sporting Calendar, you will find no difficulty in obtaining that high academical honor. Nobody can accuse you of unitarianism, arianism, or any other *ism* but epicurism, puppyism, and jockeyism, so you will have your degree hollow. It is a done thing. You have no heterodox notions, not you. Perfectly orthodox in your veneration for pot, bottle, and gun. I intend, however, to make you a present previously to your taking your doctor's degree. It is my grandmother's bible. I would sooner warrant, than I would warrant the soundness of the last horse you sold, that you never possessed one before, and never looked into one in your life. We are birds of a feather for that matter.

I have serious thoughts of proceeding in the divinity

line myself. My father has the advowson of our parish-church; a good three hundred a year. Not to be despised, my boy, in these hard times. It will keep the pack, with good management. I take my master's degree soon, and intend to be doctored in due time. Dr. Hunter, my tutor, has given me an old Latin sermon that I am sure will do for the exercise, because it has done already a dozen times at least, and is almost worn out in the service. *Probatum est.* I send it enclosed for your use, as you will want it first. Get the head boy at the grammar school to read it over to you three or four times, that you may avoid false quantities, before you sport it at St. Mary's. If you want any strings of syllogisms, or divinity arguments, you will find a large bundle in my shoe-hole.

We are both, I am sure, well qualified to be doctors; that is, cow doctors, sow doctors, and horse doctors, for we have made farriery the study of our lives; and many that have been bedoctored before us, never made any thing half so useful their study.

My old boy here is very troublesome. If he thought I was a student in divinity, I believe I should win his heart, for he loves the church as well as he does his money.

I keep him under, and seldom let him come into my apartment; for there is no bearing with such an illiterate old blockhead. It is my misfortune to be disgraced by my family.

I hope to give you the meeting next term, at Oxford. I have therefore parted with all my books to pay off a tick that Square-toes struck with the bookseller; but I have got a new stud, such as will delight your eyes. As soon as I have taken my degree, I intend to sport racers at New market. I have got a good deal of preparatory knowledge from doctor Hunter, who is a very good kind of fellow, I assure you. He accompanies me every where. I pay the piper; but he furnishes knowledge.

I would invite you to spend a few weeks here, as we have plenty of game; but I really am ashamed of my father and mother. More of this when I see you. Let me know by the next opportunity where you bought your neat boots.

Your's faithfully, J. H.

Poor Jack has lost his father since these letters were written, and finding the estate not so large as he imagined, and himself greatly in debt, he begins to reflect seriously on the folly of his conduct. He talked to the old vicar on the subject very rationally; and declared that he owed his misfortunes and misconduct to the fear of ridicule and contempt, in a place of education, where literary ambition, with which he glowed at first entering it, had little or no encouragement; where false spirit, extravagance, horsejockeyship, and all its concomitants, were sure of gaining notice and esteem; where time was not sufficiently filled up by laudable employments; where *forms* occupied the place of substance; where to be *knowing* in the amusements of gay life, was the sort of knowledge most prized; and where a degree of pride and insolence is assumed with the cap and gown,* which teaches a freedom from what are falsely called prejudices, and a *contempt for parents*, however respectable, if they are not distinguished by fashionable folly, modern refinements, the tricks of gamesters, and the cant language of buffoons, whose wit is merely animal vivacity.

EVENING LVII.

ON THE NECESSITY OF DIGNIFYING PUBLIC OFFICERS AND MAGISTRATES BY PERSONAL MERIT AND A CORRESPONDING APPEARANCE.

THE condition of human nature is so frail that it is almost ridiculous in any man to exhibit the appearance of grandeur and dignity. But there are persons who seem to possess a native weight of character which adds to their words authority, and to their actions force.

This endowment, whatever it is, was intended by Providence for the communication of good and the prevention of evil. Those who possess it seem to have a natural claim to command, to civil pre-eminence, to the honorable and important offices of the magistrate and the legislator.

But in the confusion of the present scene, riches usurp the authority which nature intended for her favorites; and

* Hoc nobis *pilea* donant. *Persius.*

it is common to observe persons invested with civil and official importance, whose natural insignificancy exposes their persons to contempt, and renders their offices ineffectual. A Lord Mayor of London, for instance, raised from a low origin by fortunate events in trade, destitute of education and natural dignity, degrades at once the office and himself by the advancement of which he was ambitious. He grows more conspicuous by elevation; and the meanness which would pass unnoticed, or might even be palliated in his natural station becomes, when he is invested with the gold chain and the scarlet robe, a solemn mockery of magistracy.

Much of the contumacy of the common people has, I think, arisen from the want of personal authority in the magistrates. In ignorant ages the mere robes and insignia of office might command respect; but in times when if few are profoundly, yet all are superficially learned, much more is required to secure a voluntary deference than the exaction of it by force, or the inviting of it by ostentation.

To secure respect, a mind must be visible; a mind furnished with knowledge and enlarged with liberality. Without disinterestedness no public character, however remarkably distinguished by talents, natural or acquired, can be long illustrious. Opinion or esteem is the foundation of authority; but how is opinion or esteem to be conciliated in favor of a man, who has bought his nominal honors, and knows not to act, to speak, or to think consistently with the elevated place to which his vanity has aspired?

If vanity did not usually close the ear to the voice of advice, I would venture to whisper to every candidate for public honors, that he will probably derive no real credit from them, if he is conscious that, he has not enjoyed the benefit of a liberal education. In private life he may be very respectable as an honest man, and a good master of a family; but in public, he must be contemptible, without an elevation of sentiment corresponding with the elevation of his rank. I own that in some instances this elevation is visible where education has been defective. Strong parts and a long commerce with the world have supplied the defect; but these instances are not so common as to justify the generality of uneducated rich men

in supposing that they are furnished by nature with talents, knowledge, and authority sufficient to qualify them for rule, for offices of public dignity and national importance. Genius has no peculiar claims either at the Royal Exchange or the Herald's Office.

These reflections were suggested by the following letter;

SIR,

I am a foreigner and have spent a year or two in England, solely for the purpose of improving myself in a nation which is respected throughout Europe, as exhibiting a state of improvement and a generosity of sentiment, which reflect honor on human nature.

When I came to London I was ambitious of being introduced to the acquaintance of those who, I was told, were the principal magistrates; one of whom annually resided in the magnificent mansion of magistracy, and rode, as I often saw, with triumphal pomp in a gilded vehicle, through the streets of London. I found it by no means difficult to be introduced to a public feast, where I endeavored to form an intimacy with the chief magistrate. I succeeded so far as to be invited to a private dinner with him, and a few of his brother aldermen, and members of the common council.

The entertainment was sumptuous and genteel. But conversation was my object, and I spared no pains to lead to such subjects as I thought might afford me the most valuable information. I mentioned several of those topics connected with English history, in which I had read that the city of London had a principal share; but my remarks caused only a vacant stare, and received no other reply than such as—"I do not know, Sir,—I really forget, Sir. —Give me leave to help you to a slice of ham, Sir." I thought my conversation might be ill-timed, and therefore said no more on the subject of history, but joined in the general topics of the day. Pardon me, Sir, but I could not help blushing for two or three gentlemen in gold chains, who expressed themselves ungrammatically and vulgarly on the commonest subjects. I am a foreigner, and therefore must not pretend to be a critic in your language *pronunciation*; but I appeal to you whether—"Them *and there* things—This here weal—My vife"—are reconci-

lable either to grammar or the elegance of polite conversation.

I ought not to be censorious, nor am I disposed to deride; but I cannot help observing, that the magistrates appeared, from the general turn of conversation, to be far less well informed and less liberally minded than their stations require. If the merchants and gentlemen of the metropolis are not better accomplished than the magistrates of my acquaintance, I own I shall lose something of that respect for your nation which I entertained while I was at home.

I intend to write my travels; and if I were to give an accurate account of those of your principal persons in the corporation of London with whom I have associated, I fear I should affront a people to whom I owe gratitude. The dignified magistrates of the first city in the universe would appear to be on a level with our vulgar. I dare say, and indeed am well informed, that there are members of the court who are polite and well-informed gentlemen; but that too often pragmatical persons offer themselves for the scarlet robe, who ought to be contented with the leathern apron. I endeavor to view things as a philosopher and cosmopolite, and I cannot but think that the degradation of the magistracy must be injurious to the police, the morals, and the liberty of your country. Pardon my freedom, and believe me,

Your's, &c.

A SWISS.

EVENING LVIII.

ON SAYING GRACE AT TABLE.

Reverentia mensæ. *Juv.*

SIR,

I Am an old man, and have resided in a village above a hundred miles from London during the last forty years; but I was lately tempted, partly by curiosity and *partly by* business, to spend a month at Christmas *with an old* friend at the west end of the town. *was very much* pleased with many improvements which

I observed, and as I am not morose, I think I was not
clined to be querulous at any thing without cause.
there is one thing which gives me much offence, an
dare say you will allow it to be unjustifiable. I observed t
the good old practice of begging a blessing on the refr
ment of a dinner, and returning thanks for it to Him v
is the author and giver of all good, was become
fashionable.

I have been laughed at more than once at some v
elegant tables to which my friend introduced me,
standing up and expecting the master to say grace b
before and after meat. I found it impossible to conti
the practice at another man's house, with a whole ci
around ready to stare with surprise, or laugh with sc
I was therefore contented with a silent ejaculation;
though I conformed outwardly to the canons of fashio
entered a secret protest against them, and beg le
through your means to make my protest public.

Give me leave to inform those polite gentlefolk, v
have dropped the practice with an idea of its being su
stitious, vulgar, puritanical, that a consecration of the
ble was observed religiously by the politest nations of
tiquity.

The ancient Greeks esteemed the table HIER
CHREMA, or a *sacred thing*; and Cleodemus, in Pluta
calls it the ALTAR OF FRIENDSHIP AND HOSPIT
ITY.

They made the first offerings to the gods, and cal
them απαρχαι, or first fruits; and at the conclusion of
feast, they poured out, to the gods again, σπονδαι or λοι
libations of wine.

They were unwilling to partake of the meal till a
of the provision had been offered to the gods, in orde
sanctify the whole. Even Achilles whose impetuous
rit was not prone to the weakness of superstition, wo
not eat when the ambassadors of Agamemnon distur
him at mid-night, till he had ordered his friend to m
the oblation.

Θεοῖσι δὲ θυσαι ἀνωγει
Πάτροκλον ἐν ἱταῖσιν, ὁ δ' ἐν πυρὶ βάλλε θυηλάς.

Ulysses also, as Dr. Potter observes from Athen

when in the den of Polyphemus, did not neglect this duty of pious gratitude.

Ἐν τάδε πῦρ καιοντες ἐθύσαμεν, ἠδὲ και αυτος
Τυρῶν αἰνύμενοι φάγομεν.

Dr. Potter adds, that "in the entertainments of Plato and Xenophon we find oblations made; and to forbear the mention of more examples, the neglect of this duty was accounted a very great impiety, which none but Epicurus and those who worshipped no gods at all, would be guilty of," *apud Epicurum* ου σπονδὴ, οὐδ' απαρχα τοις θεοις.

I do not see any reason why those who, like Epicurus, refuse to honor God according to the dictates of natural gratitude, and the universal practice of the *polished* people of the world, should not be numbered among the disciples of Epicurus, and without any violation of charity, be supposed to say in their hearts, there is no God.

I could produce a great number of examples from the classics to prove that the dinner was seldom enjoyed without some mode of consecration, even among those heathens to whom we are inclined to consider ourselves as greatly superior. And shall those who call themselves Christians neglect this instance of piety? Especially as Jesus Christ has given many examples of it in the Gospel, and the people to whom it pleased God peculiarly to reveal himself, practised it from the earliest antiquity. I mentioned the practice of the *polite* heathens in the first place, because I imagined this example would have the most weight with those who chiefly value themselves on *politeness*, of which they sometimes consider the neglect of the *graces* at table, as an honorable testimony. But I will now add some examples from the practice of the ancient Jews, which, in this particular, have as much *politeness* in them as those of the Greeks and Romans, and ought to have much greater authority in a Christian country.

The master of the family among the Jews* pronounced, as soon as the guests or the family were seated, a general admonition to prayers, and then proceeded to the consecration of the dinner. The whole company sung a hymn,

* Vide Stuckii Antiquates Conviv.

which is extant in a book, entitled *the Order of the Blessings and Psalms*, and the master then said the following grace: "Blessed be the Lord our God, the King of the Universe, who feedeth the world by his goodness, and by his grace and mercy giveth nourishment to all flesh; by whose bounty it cometh to pass that food never yet hath failed, neither will fail his creatures. It is he alone who giveth existence to all things, and preserveth them, and doth good to all, and giveth food to every being that he hath created. Blessed be thou, O Lord, who feedest all things.'

He then consecrated the wine and bread in a form similar to the preceding. This longer process was, however, only observed at formal dinners, and on solemn occasions, a shorter being used on common days: and it is recorded that the master of the house said grace before meat, and one of the guests returned thanks. Perhaps it would be too great a refinement to suppose that the business of returning thanks for a dinner supplied at his expence, was declined by the master from motives of delicacy. Sometimes, however, the master returned thanks, and the company made a response. The master said, "Let us return thanks to God because we have eaten of the creatures which belonged to him;" and the guests responded immediately, "Let God be praised, of whose blessings we have eaten, and by whose bounty we live."

The primitive Christians, imitating the example of the Jews, and more particularly of our Saviour, were strict in the performance of those pious duties which consecrated the table, and in returning thanks to God for the daily supply of necessary sustenance. Chrysostom frequently mentions the benediction of the table made use of by the Monks in Egypt. In the Horologium of the Greek church, the whole form of the benediction is thus described:

Before the dinner is placed upon the table, the hundred and forty-fifth psalm is read aloud, and it no sooner is served up, than the priest repeats, "O Christ, our God, bless our meat and drink; for thou art holy now and for evermore; Amen." And after having tasted it, they all rise up and say, "Blessed art thou, O God, who pitiest us and feedest us from our youth; thou who givest food

to all flesh, fill our hearts with joy and gladness, that being always satisfied, we may abound in every good work, in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to thee, be glory, honor, power, and worship, together with the Holy Ghost. Amen." After dinner, the following is the form of thanksgiving: "Glory to thee thou holy one, Glory to thee, O King: since thou hast given us food to our comfort and joy, fill us with the Holy Ghost, that we may be found acceptable in thy sight, and not ashamed when thou shalt render to every one according to his works." Then the hundred and twenty-second psalm is read; after which—"As thou wast present in the midst of thy disciples while at supper, O thou Saviour, giving them peace, so come also to us and save us." Then follows a part of the twenty-second psalm, beginning at "the Poor shall eat and be filled, they shall praise the Lord who seek him." *Kyrie Eleison*, Lord have mercy upon us. The whole concludes with this little prayer: "Blessed be God who hath pitied and fed us with his rich gifts; may we enjoy his grace and loving kindness now and for evermore. Amen."

I imagine that the whole of this long grace was only used on extraordinary occasions; but there is no doubt but a part of it constituted the daily formulary of consecration before meals, and of gratitude after them.

Far be it from me to recommend a prolixity approaching to that of the Greek church, or to that of the college graces, as established by our pious ancestors, who, according to the complaints of the hungry scholars, used to insist on long graces, and at the same time give but short commons. I think long prayers on such occasions particularly unseasonable. But I have produced these examples to shew that the table has been considered by all people, from the earliest ages, as a *sacred thing*, and that they have ever thought it expedient to sanctify a meal by a previous consecration of the food, and a subsequent act of thanksgiving for the refreshment received. I infer, from the antiquity and universality of the practice, its propriety. It could not, I think, have been so ancient and almost universal, unless it had been also right and reasonable.

That it is right and reasonable, I believe many of those who neglect it will not seriously deny. But profligate men

of fashion have set the example of omission, and they who are determined to follow the fashion in all its follies, think themselves obliged to omit a duty both easy and useful. They ought not, they allow, to suffer fashion to supersede duty and decency: but they assert, that, such is the power of this arbitrary tyrant, they "cannot what they ought." A bad excuse indeed, and such an one as will scarcely be accepted for an omission injurious to themselves, to their children, their servants, their neighborhood, and to the cause of religion.

There is indeed something so brutally thoughtless and ungrateful in partaking of plenty and pleasure, in faring sumptuously every day, without feeling, or at least expressing gratitude, to the giver of all good gifts, that one would wonder how persons pretending to elegance and sentimental refinement, can possibly pardon themselves the impious omission. Indeed, however genteel they may appear, and however elegant their fashionable manners, yet while they sit down daily to their meals, like brutes that perish, they must be numbered among Horace's *Epicuri de grege porcos*, hogs of Epicurus's stye; and instead of soup in a China terrene, it would be a proper reproof to serve them up offal in a wooden trough.

Your's &c.

A RATIONAL FORMALIST.

EVENING LIX.

ON INJURING THE HEALTH IN ATTEMPTS TO IMPROVE BEAUTY.

SIR,

UNDER a feigned name, or without a name, I can venture to divulge some errors and misfortunes which I should not chuse to acknowledge in my own person, lest my friends should deride me.

From the information of my looking-glass, and the praises of my friends, I was led to conclude at a very early age that I was beautiful. As it is natural to pay the first attention to that on which we chiefly value ourselves, I devoted much time and care to the contemplation and *improvement* of my face. The smallest pimple or redness

gave me great uneasiness; but there was one blemish which almost broke my heart. One of my fore-teeth grew irregularly, and had at one corner the appearance of decay. This alone I imagined sufficient to counterbalance the effect of all my other graces. But as I read the pretensions of dentists in their advertisements, my mortification did not yet terminate in despair.

I applied to an operator, who confidently assured me that he could replace my tooth, by art known only to himself, in such a position as to render my rows of ivory and pearls, as he was pleased to call them, perfectly unparalleled. I submitted to his hand, and he twisted a wire round my teeth, which for six weeks gave me exquisite torment; but the hope of removing the blemish afforded me solace under it. The pain, and the peculiar diet which I was ordered to pursue, brought on a fever which killed all the roses in my cheeks, and had nearly killed me. The wires were taken out, and my tooth remained nearly in the same situation.

As I had suffered so much in attempting to do violence to nature, I resolved to submit to her in future with patience; but the little appearance of decay, which I have hinted at before, became a black spot, and prognosticated, as the doctor said, an approaching *caries*. This was terrifying indeed! Any thing on earth was tolerable in comparison with a *caries*. Nay, I know not whether, in the agonies of my mind on the apprehensions of it, I should not have submitted cheerfully to death, rather than have lived with a black speck on a front tooth. But hope once more shone upon my bosom. A kind dentist restored my spirits, by declaring that he was possessed of an art which would prevent all bad consequences, and continue the beauty of my pearly ornaments, set between rubies (for so he expressed himself,) unsullied during life.

The remedy was *transplantation*. I submitted to extraction with a stoical heroism. A chimney-sweeper, who attended at my side, parted with his best tooth for a shilling, and it was planted, reeking with blood and warm with life, in the socket whence my odious tooth with the black speck had been just drawn. I was now in a state of exultation. I thought my gums might defy old age and decay, and gloried in the idea of having almost found out the *art of rejuvenescence*. My triumph was but trans-

sient. A tumor and inflammation ensued. The pain I suffered is not to be described; but I was still a heroine, animated with the idea that the pain was but for a short time, and that the happiness would be for life.

I became so ill as to be under the necessity of seeking medical advice. Shame prevented me from informing my physician of the cause of my illness. He was at a loss to account for it; but from the appearance was induced to prescribe large dozes of mercury. The disease still continued, and I lost several of my teeth with a great part of my gums and palate. My lips were distorted, or corroded, in a frightful manner. The physician at last insisted on the necessity of my undergoing what he called a salivation. He said my life depended upon it. I submitted, and preserved my existence; but how shall I describe what I felt on looking into the glass. Every appearance of old age and deformity. I will leave to your imagination the ideas of horror and grief which tormented my heart. I gave up all pretensions to beauty, as indeed I well might; for my countenance was the picture of every thing disgustful. Think of paleness tinged with a livid yellow, a shrivelled skin, distorted lips, and toothless gums.

I find upon enquiry, that the person whose tooth had been placed in my gums, was laboring under a complication of the filthiest of diseases, and that the tooth inoculated them all on me. I have heard that I am not the only victim to such follies and unnatural practices. I understand the transplanting of teeth is dangerous, even when the person from when it is taken is healthy; but is it likely that a healthy and temperate person would part with his teeth for money? He who can submit to this, must be an abject wretch, and one whose veracity, if he declares himself healthy, can never be safely relied on.

That my life is spared, is a mercy scarcely deserved. I hope to spend it in acquiring a more solid mind and judgment than I possessed, when, from the dictates of vanity, I suffered myself to consent to an unnatural violence, cruel to another, and most injurious to myself. It will contribute something to atone for my folly, if, by communicating the consequences of it, I warn others from its imitation. Adieu.

SIR,

IT pleased Providence to give me a strong constitution, and leading a life of perfect ease and plenty, I began, at the age of eighteen, to grow rather plump, not to say fat and corpulent. Shocking epithets those! and to avoid their being applied to me, I resolved to have recourse to such methods as I had heard were effectually used in reducing the body to a moderate size. I drank vinegar copiously and all acids that I could procure. I lived upon vegetable, scarcely tasting animal food. I laced so tightly, as to squeeze myself in half my natural dimensions: and I sweated myself every day between two feather beds till I was ready to faint. These methods were not unsuccessful. I gradually shrunk to a *lady all skin and bone*. I felt great complacency in success; but I was little acquainted with the consequences which were shortly to ensue. The state of debility to which I had reduced myself, soon brought on what the physicians called an *atrophy*. And a most shocking figure I made. I looked in the glass with many a wishful sigh after my departed plumpness. I was obliged to call in a physician, who, discovering the cause of my disorder, recommended what is jocosely termed kitchen physic. He gradually led me from milk and eggs to roast beef, plum-pudding, port, and ale. He says, I was at death's door, and indeed I believe it; for my face in my looking-glass, looked just like a Death's head sculptured on a tomb-stone. I now laugh and grow fat; and, thank Heaven, am in a fair way of recovering some share of that health which I foolishly destroyed. I hope my example will warn others from falling into similar dangers, who may not have strength of constitution sufficient to escape them. It is a secret that must go no farther; but I am to be married next week to a gentleman of large fortune, and every other qualification requisite to make the state happy. If I had continued so thin and ghastly as I once was, I believe he would as soon have thought of marrying one of the skeletons in Surgeon's Hall. Adieu.

Another correspondent informs me that, having pimples in her face, she clandestinely purchased a quack medicine, which she took without advice and without judg-

ment, till at last she brought on a disorder which had nearly proved fatal.

I have heard many complain of having caught colds, fevers, and a long train of dreadful diseases, by dressing in the fashion on first coming out after a long confinement in their bed-chamber.

Many also complain of nervous weaknesses, occasioned by an abstinence, such as hermits and anachorites hardly ever practised, an abstinence from such kinds and quantities of food as are really necessary to the support of nature, an abstinence proceeding from a desire to preserve their shape, and to perpetuate their youth and beauty, but which causes extreme debility and premature old age.

I wish young ladies to be duly sensible of the value of health as well as of beauty. Beauty indeed is scarcely compatible with ill health; but if it were, it really would be a bad exchange to give up health for beauty. Under the languor of disease, and the torment of pain, many will one day lament that desire of improving their persons which led them in their youth to violate nature, and to weaken the foundation of the whole fabric, while they were endeavoring to decorate the front.

EVENING LX.

ON THE ILL-USAGE TO WHICH THE INSTRUCTORS OF YOUTH ARE SOMETIMES EXPOSED.

On croit sottement qu'il est plus honorable de conduire en qualite de capitaine, une troup d'ouvriers, ou de paysans qu'on nomme soldats, que de commander a de jeunes seigneurs, et de leur former le cœur et l'esprit.
Caracciola.

AS nothing contributes more to the encouragement and increase of excellence in a profession than the honor bestowed upon it, and the esteem in which it is held by the world; it is an useful and laudable effort which some benevolent writers have made, to raise employments of great importance to society, from the contempt into which they have unfortunately fallen.

Every one is ready to allow the importance of education, yet few entertain a due respect for the profession which is to administer it. The world is governed by

names; and with the word Pedagogue has been ludicrously associated the idea of a pedant, a mere plodder, a petty-tyrant, a gerund-grinder, and a bum-brusher.

But as the profession is not only in the very first degree useful to society, but attended with peculiar hardships and difficulties, it deserves the recompence and alleviation of public esteem.

The schoolmaster's employment has been compared to the punishment inflicted on the Danaides and on Sysiphus. His labor knows no end; for, supposing one set of scholars at one time to be attentive and to improve, yet they are succeeded soon after by new scholars, and the whole work is to be recommenced.

He languishes over the repetition of rules and precepts,* which have nothing amusing to his fancy, or improving to his understanding. He goes his round like the mill-horse, and his ears ring with cases, declensions, genders, conjugations, *Propria quæ maribus; As in præsenti; hic, hæc, hoc;* and *di, do, dum.*

He is conversant with those who continue in his company unwillingly, and are impatient to be gone; with the petulant, the peevish, the idle, the inattentive, the ungrateful, and the refractory.†

He inhales dust and impure air, and his ears are seldom relieved from noise. His patience and temper are continually put to trial: he bears about him an instrument of torture, and is frequently obliged to inflict punishment with the reluctant severity of an executioner.

If he spare the rod, he must be often busied in reprimanding, admonishing, remonstrating, and advising those who hate him for his pains; and, if they can have no other revenge, delight in giving uneasiness, by teizing the temper of their best friend, their foster-father. Few occupations exercise the temper, or tend more to spoil it, than that of a conscientious schoolmaster.

He is liable to hourly insult and affronting behavior from the senior boys, who resent with rancorous virulence the exercise of that discipline on themselves, which they

* "Quid injucundissimum in schola mihi visum sit, fatebor: illam eadem pensa retractandi, eosdemque vicies vel tricies scriptorum errores corrigendi necessitatem." *Gesner.*

† "Quam ingratus labor, totos dies versari inter pueros, inter invitos plerumque, et substrictis veluti auriculis, horam, quæ se carcere emittat, expectantes; inter petulantes, morosos, pigros, reluctantes disciplinæ!" *Ibid.*

at the same time have sense enough to know is no more than the master's duty compels him to enforce.

He is exposed to continual misrepresentation. The tongue of every boy in his school, however silly or malicious, has a tale to tell concerning his supposed mistakes, his mismanagement, his severity, his partiality, his parsimony. Himself and his family are painted to the father and mother, and to all company, in the blackest colors which malice can invent, and inexperience conceive.

The master is blamed for the faults of nature. A boy is stupid or idle, and learns nothing. He is removed in wrath; the master loses his scholar and the emoluments attending him; but that is not sufficient, he loses something of his peace and his character: for the boy is removed by those *who must allege some fault to justify the removal.* They cannot bear that an imputation should fall on the boy; and therefore the whole load of censure, aggravated with a thousand falsehoods, is laid on the master.

If he ventures to vindicate himself, he is under the necessity of throwing blame on the boy, which his generosity will often not permit; or if a regard to himself and justice compels him to speak, the offence already given is aggravated beyond all bounds, and both the boy and his friends become implacable enemies and bitter slanderers for life.*

These are only a few among the many evils which attend a profession highly useful, and even necessary to the existence of society. It will be urged that in some cases there are the alleviations of lucre; and it must be confessed that the world is not so bad as not to furnish many boys of a docile and amiable disposition, and many parents who are grateful and candid. But still there are few employments attended with more irksome labor, more liable to ill usage, and less well rewarded by those whom it most essentially serves than that of the schoolmaster.

In some cases it is said to be lucrative; but it should be remembered, that the lucre, when it is considerable usually arises from the boarding and lodging of pupils in the master's house, and not from the business of instruction

* "Illud in primis ægre ferebam si cum boni me viri officio functum esse putarem, expostulatum venirent mecum et questum injuriam in, quorum me liberis optime consuluisse, mihi constaret." *Gesner.*

and the labor of a school. And where the pupils are lodged and boarded in the superintendant's house, his trouble is ten-fold greater, and the ill-usage to which he is exposed not to be described by language.

The caprice and ill-humor of many boys is such as never can be satisfied. As on the one hand, they know little of the true nature of things, so, on the other, they are prone to judge of all they see with precipitancy. As they have not yet felt the ill-usage of the world, so they want that sort of sympathy for others which experience only can teach. They censure all who are concerned with them, and happen to displease them, without judgment and without mercy. They delight in doing mischief and injuries for diversions; and, consequently, the superintendant of a number of boys in his own house, has an office something like that of a keeper of a mad-house, a goal, or a collection of wild beasts, but much more unthankful.

Yet ingenious and learned men sometimes submit to this task voluntarily. They certainly do, and upon the principle of choosing the least of two evils; for it is better than to starve, and to involve a family in all the evils of indigence.

> Want is the scorn of every wealthy fool,
> And wit in rags is turn'd to ridicule.
>
> *Dryden's Juv.*

Hard necessity forces them to submit to the yoke, and when their shoulders have become galled till they are callous, they bear it with a patient insensibility.

Yet if we take our ideas of the business of the instructor from a poet, what can be more pleasurable?

> Delightful task! to rear the tender thought,
> To teach the young idea how to shoot,
> To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind,
> To breathe the enlivening spirit, and to fix
> The generous purpose in the glowing breast;
> Oh speak the joy!....
>
> *Thomson.*

If there were no perverseness, obstinacy, ingratitude, and stupidity, the task, to a benevolent heart might be delightful. There is something truly agreeable in assisting the efforts of a youthful mind which is at once ingenious and *ingenuous.* And certainly many virtues may be ad-

vantageously exercised in bearing with ill-usage, and doing good to those who hate and despise you.*

It is a fine opportunity of serving human nature and one's country, and I admire the philanthropy of those who, from so pure a motive, are influenced to undergo LABORS SO SEVERE, CONTUMELIES SO INSULTING, SLANDERS SO UNJUST, INGRATITUDE SO BASE. I fear the number is small

> ..... vix sunt totidem quot
> Thebarum portæ vel divitis ostia Nili. *Juv.*

The greater part submit to the labor with the common stimulus of human exertion, the hope of gain; and when it is considered that parents purchase not only ease and exemption from the toil of instruction and the trouble of their children's ill-humor, not only accomplishments useful and ornamental, but also food, accommodations, and habitation for their offspring, the gain of the masters should not be considered as earned too easily. If the masters acquit themselves well in an undertaking so arduous, they are justly entitled not only to profit but to honor.

If I should be asked, to what purpose are these observations on the ill-treatment of schoolmasters; I should answer, that they are intended to vindicate from contempt an order of men at once useful and oppressed; to induce parents to become more candid and considerate in their behavior to them, and to persuade masters themselves, actuated by a due sense of their own value in society, to scorn that meanness, submission, and obsequiousness, which invites, and almost justifies contempt.

It unfortunately happens that many masters, in a dependent state, exhibit a servility of manners which while

* The following sentiments of a schoolmaster are worthy of the most benevolent patriot and philosopher: "Jam vero parum mihi non dicam generosus sed humanus videtur cui non maximam voluptatem afferat ingens quæ in schola offertur, bene faciendi occasio. Ducuntur in scholas et fidei præceptorum committuntur parvi homines, rerum omnium imperiti et rudes, ad vitia omnia proclives. Quod majus præstari vel ipsis, vel parentibus ipsorum et cognatis, vel rei publicæ adeo, beneficium potest, quam si rudibus animis ea instituentur, unde pro stupidis, prudentes; pro mutis, infantibus certe, facundi; pro malitiosis et turpibus beneficii fiant et honesti; pro impiis denique, Christiani? Si doctorum opera fiant boni viri, qui et suis supresse rebus, et præsidio esse suis familiis, et ornare rem publicam, pro captu quisque suo, possint? Equidem liquido confirmare possum, hac me vel sola cogitatione, sæpe abstersisse, quæ offerebantur, molestias: satis compensatos labores judicasse meos, si vel ad unum alterumque ille fructus, *quem modo* dixi, perveniret."

Gesner.

it flatters the weak parent, disgraces the didactic profession. *Purse-proud parents are too apt to consider all whom they pay, as servants;* and to require an obsequiousness in the instructors of their children incompatible with the spirit of a liberal man worthy to superintend a liberal education. They demand a slavish disposition in him whom they wish to teach their children liberality both by precept and example. Men of sense and liberal minds cannot submit patiently. Others occupy their place, and succeed by adulation and by the mean arts of pleasing; and thus is the profession degraded, and education becomes, instead of a fine philosophical preparation for the conduct of life, a mere mechanical skill in writing, reading, SPOUTING, casting accounts, dancing, fencing and fiddling. And thus it must be, while masters attend more to pleasing the parent's vanity, submitting to his pride, and complying with his folly, than to serving the pupil in the rugged path of an honest discipline. The DOCTOR ROCKS always had more patients than the AKENSIDES, the ADDINGTONS, the HEBERDENS, and the PITCAIRNES. In no professions are there more arrant QUACKS than in the DIDACTIC.

EVENING LXI.

ON THE EFFECTS OF LONG SEPARATION IN THE MARRIED STATE.

I PRESENT my reader with the following letters, which describe a situation in private life.

My dear Husband,

I write not to upbraid you. I entertain a sincere affection for you, and no unkind usage shall ever remove it. I write only to let you know the state of those whom you have unfortunately abandoned, your children and your wife.

Fame has informed me, with too much authenticity, that you have found another object of your love, and that I shall see your face no more. I who had expected your

return from the East Indies with painful anxiety, who had counted the slow hours which departed you from me,—think how I was shocked at hearing you would visit England no more, and that you had settled with a mistress in the South of France. It was for your sake, as well as my own, that I lamented. You went against my earnest entreaties: but it was with a desire, which I thought sincere, to provide a genteel maintenance for our little ones, whom you said you could not bear to see brought up to the evils of poverty. I might now lament the disappointment in not sharing the expected riches which I hear you have amassed. But I scorn it. What are riches compared to the delight of sincere affection! I deplore the loss of your love; I deplore the frailty which has involved you in error, and will, I am sure, as such mistaken conduct must, terminate in misery.

But I mean not to remonstrate. It is, alas! too late. I only write to you to acquaint you with the health and some other circumstances of myself and those little ones whom you once loved.

The large house in which you left us in Harley-street could not be supported without an expence which the little sum you left behind could not long supply. I have relinquished it, and retired to a neat little cottage in a village fifty miles from London. We can make no pretensions to elegance; but we live in great neatness, and, by strict economy, supply our moderate wants with as much comfort as our desolate situation will allow. Your presence, my love, would make the little cottage a palace.

Poor Emily, who is grown a fine girl, has been working a pair of ruffles for you, and often, as she plies her needle, repeats with a sigh, When will my dear papa return? The others are constantly asking me the same question; and little Henry, as soon as he began to talk, learned to lisp, in the first syllables he ever uttered, When will papa come home?

Sweet fellow! He is now sitting on his stool by my side, and as he sees me drop a tear, asks me why I cry, *for papa* will come home soon. He and his two brothers *are frequently* riding on your walking-cane, and take particular delight in it, because it is papa's.

I do assure you I never open my lips to them on the

cause of your absence. But I cannot prevail with myself to bid them cease to ask when you will return, though the question frequently extorts a tear (which I hide in a smile,) and wrings my soul, while I suffer in silence.

I have taught them to mention you with the greatest ardor of affection in their morning and evening prayers; and they always add of themselves a petition for your speedy return.

I spend my time in giving them the little instruction I am able. I cannot afford to place them in any eminent school, and do not chuse that they should acquire meanness and vulgarity at a low one. I hope you will approve my teaching Emily and the two elder boys the French language. They have already made a tolerable proficiency in it. As to English, they read alternately three hours every morning the most celebrated poets and prose writers, and they can write, though not an elegant, yet a very plain and legible hand.

Do not, my dear, imagine that the employment is irksome. It affords me a sweet consolation in your absence. Indeed, if it were not for the little ones, I am afraid I should not support it.

I think it will be a satisfaction to you to hear that, by retrenching our wants and expences, we are enabled to pay for every thing we buy; and though poor, are not unhappy from the want of any necessary.

Pardon my interrupting you. I mean to give you satisfaction. Though I am deeply injured by your error, I am not resentful. I wish you all the happiness you are capable of, and am your once loved, and still affectionate,

EMILIA.

After an interval of three years, the following answer was returned:

Excellent EMILIA.

By the time you receive this, the hand which wrote it will be laid in the grave. I have ordered it not to be transmitted to you till I am departed; and I am now on my death-bed. My physician has told me in delicate terms, that I cannot recover.

Avarice led me to separate from you; a separation of a year or two caused me, weak as I was, to forget you, and to form a connection, from which I have derived no

thing but torment. I deserved it by my folly and my wickedness. You were the best of women, and I have wronged you beyond the power of reparation.

I will not give you pain by a particular enumeration of my various miseries. I have been infatuated by one who loved me not, but loved the treasure, I rapidly amassed in the East, and left no effort untried to captivate my affections. She contrived to come home in the same ship, where our acquaintance increased to an intimacy, which has laid the foundation of all my distress. But, could you believe it? After having spent in dissipation and in gaming almost the whole of my fortune, she left me, not without involving me in a fatal duel, and accompanied the man who gave me my death's wound. The following letter I enclose, that you may have the satisfaction to see how different a woman she was from yourself:

Despicable Wretch,

Do you think I will live in beggary with you? Refuse to buy me the diamond necklace! Captain ——— is a generous man. He has long expressed a regard for me. He has bought the necklace which you, mean fellow, refused. Make no more pretensions to me; and if you dare be angry with the Captain for any liberties he may take, be assured you will meet with your match: and I hope to hear that he makes you repent your insolence when you aspired to the affections of one who is deserving of a man of spirit, and ——

Your's no more.

Till I received this I never thought of your letter. Indeed, as I knew your hand, I never opened it, for it reached me when I was intoxicated with newly-acquired opulence, and a variety of vicious gratifications.

It has indeed afforded me satisfaction, as you kindly intended it, to find that my poor children have such a mother to compensate the injuries of a deluded father.

The wound inflicted by my antagonist, who is also a married man, is in a vital part; and there is not, as I have told you, the least hope of recovery. I can scarcely wish it, unless it were to repent of my transgressions; for I should be ashamed to see my injured Emilia, and the presence of the little ones would break my heart. I have had

time to make a will; and the sum which I have left, though little in comparison with what I acquired abroad, will, I confide, under your care, supply a decent competency.

Forgive me, my dear wife, forgive me, my dear children, and remember that the father who cruelly deserted you, lived a wretch in consequence of his unkindness, and died prematurely. It was the last satisfaction he had, that he lived to see his error, and to ask God and his family forgiveness. Farewell; and may you and your dear children avoid the misery by avoiding the wickedness of your husband, ———

The silent grief of the amiable Emilia can easily be conceived. But her own heart and her children consoled her. She had brought up her children virtuously, and furnished them with useful knowledge to the best of her power: and they repaid her by gratitude and good conduct. The addition to their very little fortune was opulence to those who had not expected it.

When time had mitigated her grief, I have often heard her in conversation lament the situations which cause married persons to separate at a great distance, and for a long time, which, in some minds, are apt to erase the traces of affection; and she has spoken with warmth against that avarice which drives people who have a competency, and might reasonably be contented at home, to foreign climes in pursuit of enormous wealth, which Providence, as a punishment for avarice, frequently renders the occasion of misery.

EVENING LXII.

ON CONFOUNDING RELIGION WITH SUPERSTITION.

Horum enim sententiæ omnium non modo superstitionem tollunt in qua inest Timor *inanis* Deorum; sed etiam Religionem quæ Deorum pio cultu continetur. *Cic. de Nat. Deo. Lib.* I. 42.

SUCH is the imperfection of language, that words cannot be found to discriminate all the variety of ideas of *the human mind* with that degree of precision which is *necessary to* avoid error. A great many mistakes in the

rals arise from the abuse of words, which are too often either voluntarily or malevolently misunderstood and misapplied. The Christian religion has always suffered by this perversion. It suffers at this time, since it is denominated by those who impiously endeavor to injure its cause, a mode of *superstition*. Though man boasts much of his reason, it is really astonishing to consider how few exercise it with effect. Give any thing a bad name, and the majority of mankind will abominate it without examination, merely in consequence of the first impression which they hastily received from a misapplied appellation.

The freethinkers of this age, who dignify themselves with the name of liberal philosophers, hesitate not to stigmatize all religion with the name of superstition. They who wish to be esteemed men of liberal minds, and who abhor the ridicule and censure which attends the bigot, are but too ready to join with the pretended philosophers in exploding religion. To avoid the epithet of superstitious, which conveys to them the idea of weakness, they are rash and precipitate enough to reject all the comfortable offers which religion reaches out to her sincere votaries. The very name frightens them; and if they resolve not to fear God, it is very certain that they are sadly afraid of man. They dare the vengeance of Omnipotence; but they cannot stand against the ridicule of a pert witling and the sarcasm of a minute philosopher.

He must know little of the history of mankind who shall deny that superstition has prevailed in all ages and all nations, and caused much cruelty and misery. Man has a natural tendency to superstition. Feeling himself weak and miserable, he is ready to fly to any thing which his fancy suggests to him as a refuge in distress. A stock or a stone become the object of his adoration. He is ready to inflict on himself the most excruciating torments, or to suffer them from others, if he is once persuaded that he can thus appease an angry Deity. Natural affection dies at the command of superstition. A child is sacrificed with alacrity, if the devotee is taught, that with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Every thing yields to the devout phrenzy. That every philanthropist should therefore endeavor to prevent its diffusion among mankind, is to be expected and applauded. But let him not, through carelessness or violence, root up a salutary plant in his endeavor

to eradicate a weed. Religion is the medicine of human life, as superstition is its bane.

In this enlightened age there is little danger of gross superstition. The darkness of ignorance was necessary to give to the bugbears of imagination the appearance of reality. Opinions are examined in this country with that freedom which our happy constitution allows, and that perspicacity which a multitude of well-informed understandings must reasonably be supposed to possess. The national religion is therefore professed in all its native purity, and they who presume to call it superstition, only prove their own wickedness and vanity.

Such vanity must be wicked, though at the same time, it owes much of its origin to folly. Weak men often seek nothing farther than the applause of their company. They appear wonderfully wise in their own eyes, if they can astonish their neighbors by the singularity or the boldness of their opinions. Such men are to be known, whenever a religious idea is introduced, by a significant sneer of contempt, or an uplifting of the eye-brows with an air of conscious superiority. If the language of grimace is not sufficiently understood, they think it necessary to suggest a hint, "that they look upon all such superstitious stuff as unworthy men of sense," (by which they mean to characterize themselves,) "and fit only to scare children and old women. For their own parts, they must congratulate themselves that they are emancipated from the horrid slavery of prejudice."

Nevertheless it would appear, on a fair examination, that these arrogant talkers are only half learned, and that pride fills up the mighty void of sense; yet, such is the confidence with which they speak, that the young and the weak are often seduced by them, and become their disciples. Thus their sect is increased in numbers, and their arrogance increases in a much greater proportion.

They teach their disciples that religion owes its rise to subtle politicians, and its support to the arts of priestcraft. It is at once a melancholy and an undeniable truth, that religion has been hypocritically abused by statesmen and ecclesiastics to serve the purposes of avarice and ambition. But will cavillers never desist from arguing against the use of a thing from its abuse, a fallacy unworthy a man of common understanding or common

honesty? I reprobate those politicians and those priests who have attempted to avail themselves of religion as an artifice to promote their secular designs. They are more detestable than the open and declared unbeliever. If he is honest, he is an object of compassion rather than contempt: but those artful politicians, who think to drive men to slavery, or obedience, as they call it, by frightening them with the phantoms of religion which they do not themselves believe, deserve the vengeance of society. It will be said, that they mean to preserve good order by promoting superstition. I cannot call that good order which is preserved only by the deceit and hypocrisy of the rulers. Good order requires that men capable of so mean deceit should not be the governing a part of society. Their very pre-eminence disturbs good order. The only good order which they really wish to promote is, that tame acquiescence among the lower ranks, which allows themselves to lord it over a subject world.

It is very true, that religion contributes to secure a peaceable acquiescence in good government. This is one among its many beneficent effects; but it is not true that religion is only the invention of politicians, and a mere state engine to effect tranquillity. It originates in the human mind from the spontaneous feelings of nature. In the most unenlightened countries, where no pretensions were ever made to revelation, traces of it are to be found. Nothing but ignorance united with depravity can deny the foundations of natural religion. Every good mind admitting natural religion by the light of natural understanding, will rejoice to find so many proofs of the Christian revelation.

To fear God is the best method of acquiring that true courage which fears nothing else. The fear of God arises not from a timorous and weak mind, as the infidel pretenders to philosophy represent it. I appeal to facts in the history of mankind. Have not the bravest and best men in all ages and nations displayed a reverential awe of God? If only the weak had patronized religion, it would long ago have been exploded. The examples and arguments of the best and wisest of mankind, have operated, under the direction of Providence, in continuing in the world, that source of all true comfort, a due sense of religion. The vain and the wicked have endeavored to

destroy it, and they have always succeeded with a few; but they have not been able to prevail universally; neither will they; for it is founded on the rock of truth, and the *gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

I am sorry to observe the philosophy of Epicurus gaining ground in our country. It might be called the philosophy of Satan. It is destructive of every thing virtuous and good, and equally portends the ruin of empires and of human nature. It flatters human depravity so much, that nothing can impede its progress but the counteracting prevalence of Christian principles and practices.

I therefore seriously exhort all who are Christians indeed, to dare to profess what they believe, and to discountenance error by the native fortitude of truth. The misfortune is, that the modest Christian is too often restrained by his love of peace, and by his humility, from standing up in the defence of the Gospel; while the patrons of error, incited by vanity, and a malignant desire of rendering others as wicked and miserable as themselves, are indefatigable in the diffusion of their opinions. It becomes the duty of the sincere Christian to exert himself, when unbelievers multiply, and when the scorner declares the Christian religion like all other religions, to be only "*a mode of superstition.*"

On the Machiavellian principle of using religion as an engine of state, let me ask the pretended philosophers how the most important transactions of civil life, and how the business of courts of judicature can proceed, when the doctrine shall be successfully diffused, that Christianity is but an artful delusion to inthral the vulgar? What an oath be then of any force or obligation? These philosophers are more injurious to the interests of society than many malefactors who are by judges of their country capitally convicted. They destroy the very root of all civil and moral virtue. They are teachers of vice, not of timid and reluctant vice, but of vice which dares the broadest-day light, and boldly stands itself on avowed principle.

I will conclude with making one observation, which, though it may not find universal approbation, will, I think, deserve it. I am persuaded that a good man ought to be *cautious of expressing himself with scorn and contempt even on the subject of those many false religions*

which prevail in the world, and which may justly deserve the name of superstition; for it appears to me, that God Almighty, as a benevolent being, must always be pleased with intentional service and obedience, though the mode of performing it should be erroneous. At least, I believe it will admit no doubt, that God will be better pleased with the zeal of the most superstitious, than with the impiety and presumption of the unbelieving philosopher, who proudly imagines his own reason to be the standard of all truth and propriety.

These unhappy dupes of pride will, I dare say, at some future day, find their error refuted, if not by argument, yet by the slow punishments of an avenging God. For great and terrible is the Lord God omnipotent. Who may abide his wrath? "If his wrath be kindled, yea but a little, blessed are they all that put their trust in him."

Blessed indeed are they who throughout life have served their God with devotion and humility. God shall make all their bed in their sickness. Life to them shall be pleasant, as a journey through a delightful country, warmed and enlightened by the sun; and death shall be to them disarmed of his terrors; so that both in life and at death, they shall experience the truth of that declaration, which teaches us, that *the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.*

EVENING LXIII.

ON SUFFERING THE JUDGMENT TO BE MISLED BY WIT ON RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS.

TO be remarkable for that lively and creative power of the mind which invents such ideas as are both pleasing and surprising, by their truth and novelty, is a distinction greatly to be valued. It is to possess a power of diffusing a charm on every subject, and of striking conviction into the mind with an instantaneous impulse. There is no doubt but that the Giver of every good gift intended that it should be productive of beneficial effects. It is certainly conducive to cheerfulness, and enlivens the dull identity of common life. It ridicules folly; and, by

ridiculing, frequently corrects it. It often decides with momentary intuition on subjects of which plodding industry has labored only to augment the obscurity. None, I believe will indulge a general invective against wit, but those who are destitute of it.

Wit has sometimes been used as an auxiliary to reason in the defence of religion. Dr. South possessed a share of abilities which were sufficient to brandish any weapon which he chose to employ. Wit in his hand was sharp and irresistible, and made its way like the scymitar or the battle-axe. He was one of the ablest champions of the church. He is not only a wit but a solid reasoner. His learning is equal to his natural endowments. Wit enlivens the mass of his erudition, as the leaven leaveneth a farinaceous substance. Dr. South exerted his wit to so good purposes, and with so much effect, that he is most deservedly placed in a high rank among the many excellent preachers who have adorned this country. Yet a sincere admirer of him cannot but wish that he had not deformed his writings with some expressions which, though not destitute of humor, must be condemned as vulgar and indecorous.

Dr. Horne, the Bishop of Norwich, who discovered a genuine spirit of piety in his writings, and displayed the beauty of holiness in all its charms, has attacked the philosophy of Hume with the arms of ridicule. Indeed many parts of Hume's philosophy appear to carry with them their own refutation by inherent absurdity; but they fall into the hands of those whose want of learning and of principles induces them to admit the arguments of sophistry in defence of libertinism. Dr. Horne justly supposed that the admirers of Hume were more likely to be disabused of their error by the fear of derision, than by any force of argumentation. He has indeed derided both Hume and the Humists, as they affect to style themselves, with singular success. I only wish that the part of his book in which they are attacked could be universally introduced to their notice. It would operate as an antidote to the poison of the sceptic, unless indeed its genuine effect should be prevented by the force of established prejudice.

The latter part of Dr. Horne's Letters upon Infidelity I should not have regretted, if it had been entirely omit-

ted. It owes its origin to an obscure pamphlet, which would never have immerged to notice by its own strength: and the difficulties of many passages in Scripture will never be removed, to the satisfaction of cavilling sceptics, by the most ingenious answers.

It must be owned, that great caution is required in the use of wit and humor as an auxiliary to the cause of religion. They induce a levity of mind, which is too apt to degenerate to a wanton disregard of every thing serious. Religion, like a chaste matron, should appear in a dress which excites sentiments of respect, and forbids familiarity. When she is introduced to mankind in a grotesque or gay attire, she ought to be under the direction of a guide who can teach her to preserve an air of dignity in the midst of her condescension: I mean to suggest that wit and humor should never be used in religious treatises but by writers whose judgment, like that of Dr. Horne, is superior to their comic abilities, and whose comic abilities, like Yorick's, would set the table in a roar.

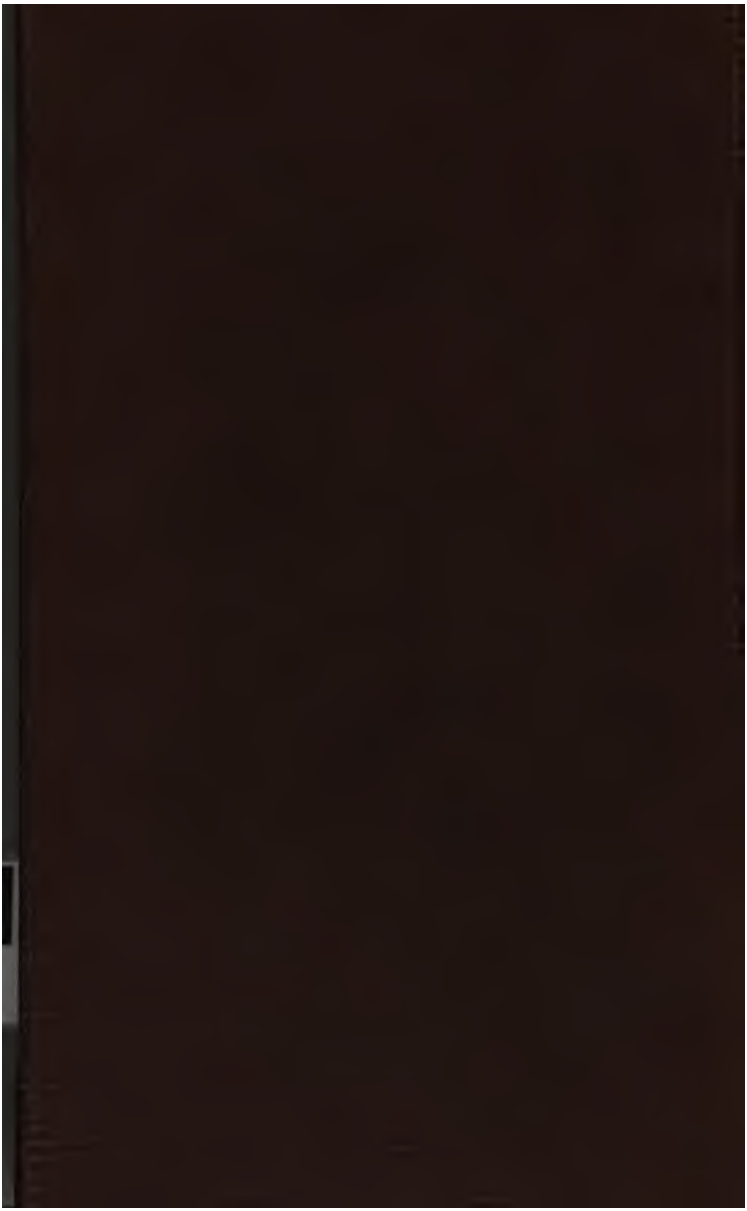
Wit and humor have indeed been much more frequently employed as the enemies than as the auxiliaries of Christianity. The natural man, as he is styled in the Holy Scriptures, that is, the man who is unregenerated by grace, and he also who is but little read in theological learning, will find a multitude of particulars in Scripture which, with but a small share of ingenuity, they may perversely turn to ridicule. To be facetious on sacred subjects requires more malignity than wit.

That Voltaire had wit, none can deny but those who are destitute of it. In subjects of polite literature his wit is always delightful, though his judgment is said to be not always sound; but on subjects which concern things sacred, both his wit and his judgment deserve reprobation. Here his wit is always misapplied, as well as often false.

But allowing for the sake of argument, that the wit of Voltaire in sacred subjects is pure and excellent, yet every man of sense and seriousness will arm himself with caution before he ventures to give it his attention. A man has so much to gain or to lose by his religion, that he will not rashly incur the danger of losing all belief in it. He recollects that the sparks of wit are often like the fire of a nocturnal vapor, which shines only to seduce, or like

some stones fabricated by art in imitation of nature, at once brilliant and false.

Reason only, or the powerful impulses of conscience, can influence a man of sense in affairs of religion. Convince me, if you can, he will say, that my religion is ill-founded, and I will relinquish it. But to convince is not in the power of wit alone. Its province is to amuse the fancy, and not to persuade the faculty of reason.

It may be rather difficult to avoid delusion when it appears under so pleasing a form as that of wit; but as religion is confessedly of infinite consequence to our happiness, let us always prove the solidity of the wit by the touchstone of good sense. An impartial application of that test will, I am convinced, always become favorable in the result to the cause of Christianity. If we are led by curiosity to read the works of celebrated wits who have taken the part of infidelity, let us always discriminate between wit and argument, so as to be amused only by the wit, and remain unshaken in our faith till the fortress of it is battered by the main force of superior and commanding reason. Christianity has stood like a rock of ages amidst the waves of the sea, for many centuries, against every attack whether of wit or of argument, and, under the divine Providence, there is every reason to believe that it shall stand till time itself shall be absorbed in eternity.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.